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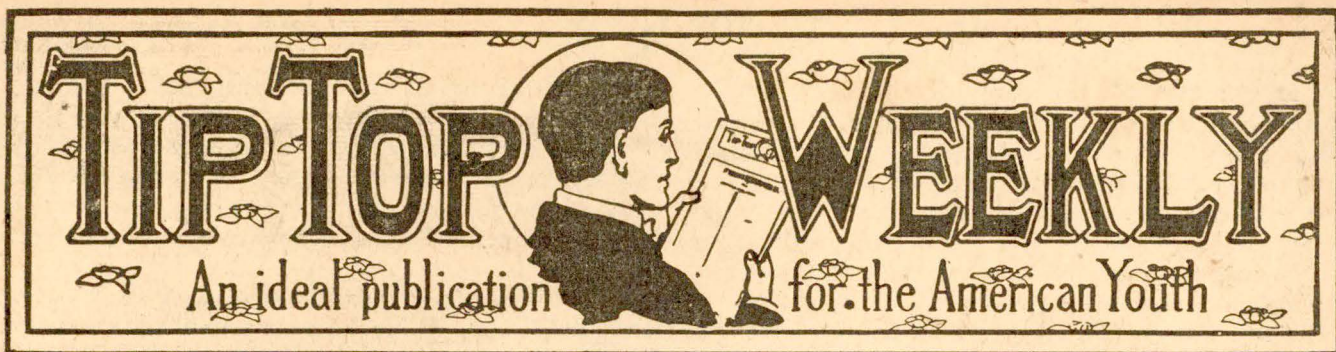
NEW YORK, JANUARY 6, 1906.

Price, Five Cents

FRANK MERRIWELL'S "FLYING FEAR" OR The GRAY GHOST OF THE YAQUI. FEAR



The desperate and reckless fugitive spurred the doubly burdened horse at the rift, uttering a yell of defiance. The splendid animal responded nobly and went sailing over the gap.



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NEW YORK, January 6, 1906.

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Frank Merriwell's "Flying Fear";

OR,

The Gray Ghost of the Yaqui.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

BESIEGED AT ESPITA.

Outside the little railroad station there was a surging mob of Mexican laborers and half-blood Indians. The crowd was in a savage mood. Their excited faces and furious gestures betokened the condition of anger into which they had wrought themselves. They pushed and swayed in an endeavor to get nearer the heavy closed door. They clamored at the barred windows. They beat upon the outer walls of the little building. Occasionally they flourished weapons and made deadly threats against the inmates of the building.

"Cursed gringos!"

"Cheating Americans!"

"Give us our money!"

"Kill the American dogs!"

"Smash down the door!"

"Break open the windows!"

"Drag them forth!"

The leader of this rioting was an unusually tall and

brawny Mexican, with a scarred face and a pair of savage eyes. He moved here and there amid the crowd, urging them on. Whenever he observed that they were growing quieter he shouted at them in coarse and degraded Spanish, recounting their wrongs and telling them what fools they were if they did not wreak vengeance on the dishonest Americans who had injured them.

They feared this man of the scarred countenance. If in that crowd there were those whose sober judgment told them they were making a mistake, these men dared not let it be known. If two or three quiet ones drew apart and spoke in low tones by themselves, the man with the scar came rushing upon them and demanded to know if their hearts were weakening, and if they were going to let these miserable American cheats rob them of the money they had earned by the sweat of their brows. Nor would he desist until he had forced them into the yelling mob, and saw them shouting, and pushing, and clamoring with the rest.

The Construction Company of the new Central Sonora Railroad was having its troubles. To begin with, Tom Stockton, a notorious gambler, known throughout the Southwest as "The Wolf," had followed up the track-layers and pillaged the laborers of their money at his gaming-tables. He had further debauched them by dealing out mescal and American whisky of the cheapest sort.

But this was not all. A pay train had been robbed, the guard shot, and the money "packed" away into the mountains. It was believed that this also was the work of Stockton.

A strike on the road followed, for the workmen declined to receive anything but money for their labor, and this they demanded promptly on the day it was due. Reason, logic, promises—all were vain. In a body those men threw down their tools and stopped working.

Watson Scott, familiarly known in Wall Street as "Old Gripper," was the real power behind the Central Sonora. Scott's lieutenants had informed him of the difficulties encountered by them, which led the old man to leave his New York office for a time and rush away to Northwestern Mexico.

As soon as he found just how grave the situation was, Scott decided that the man to meet and overcome the difficulties was Frank Merriwell. Had Scott himself been younger, and had he felt it possible to remain on the scene of action, he would not have appealed to any one. But he knew Merriwell thoroughly, knew his youth; knew his enthusiasm, and knew his determination and ability. Therefore, he sent a "hurry-up" message to Frank.

Frank arrived while the strike was at its height. After falling into the hands of Stockton, to the peril of his life, he turned the tables on the gambler by escaping and then taking Stockton captive.

But The Wolf was slippery, and he in his turn escaped from Frank. The last report received from Merriwell by Old Gripper was to the effect that Frank was hot on the trail of Stockton.

Just now, while the mob battered, and clamored, and raged outside the little station, Scott, with begrimed face and hands, and wearing dust-laden clothes, sat inside on an upended box, smoking a rank cob pipe and scowling at a crack in the floor. His elbows rested on his knees, and he seemed entirely oblivious to his surroundings.

In one corner of the room sat a pale-faced youth, who started and shivered at every fresh outbreak from the mob.

Two other men were there. They were bearded, sun-browned fellows, with a certain dash and devil-may-care atmosphere about them, in spite of their rough clothes and accumulated dirt. These men were walking arsenals. About their waists were cartridge-belts, bearing pistol-holsters, from which peeped the dark butts of heavy weapons. Each was also supplied with a knife-sheath and a knife. They were booted, and from their boot-legs protruded the butts of pistols.

But that was not all, for both men had Winchester rifles.

These two men were acting as Watson Scott's body-guard. At least, twice had they saved him from the hands of the mob, but they were not confident that they could do so a third time. Their names were Perkins and Jackson.

"The greasers will sure have that door down before long, Bob," observed Jackson, in a mild tone of voice. "She's pretty solid, but she wasn't built to stand an assault like this."

Perkins drew forth a twist of tobacco and bit off a piece, which he slowly turned upon his tongue.

"I reckon you're right, Joe," he nodded. "If they went at her good and plenty, they'd have her busted in less than a minute. The only reason why they don't is because they know we're in here with our shooting-irons. If the curs do bust the doors or one of these windows, we'll have to shoot up a few of them."

"We don't want to do no shooting until compelled to," said Jackson. "It'll make the situation a heap sight worse."

"All the same," retorted Perkins, "we've got to keep them away from Mr. Scott. Of course we might save our own skins by letting them at him if they break in, but I don't reckon we'll do that."

"Well, hardly!" exclaimed Perkins, in a low tone. "We'll stand by the old man as long as we can put up any kind of a fight. Between you and I, he's got sand, and plenty of it. Just take a look at him now. Would you ever suspect that several hundred coyotes were howling round outside this building, just thirsting to reach him and tear him to pieces? There he sits, puffing at that old pipe, as calm as an eight-day clock. I wonder what he's thinking of?"

"It's good betting that he's wondering what has become of the man he depended on so much, this fellow Merriwell."

"Don't speak of that man to me! Why, he's a tenderfoot! I know he owns a mine or two down this way, but, all the same, he's Eastern born and bred, and he knows as much about handling a situation like this or solving the troubles of this company as I know about Greek or Latin. These college boys are a heap amusing sometimes. When they break out of their books and start in to do things in the world, they have an idea that their accumulated knowledge and massive abilities will just land them at the top of the heap in short order. It takes years for them to learn that there are men who never even saw the outside walls of a college, who can let them deal the cards, and then beat them at their own game."

"Uh-huh!" grunted Old Gripper, stirring slightly and cocking one eye toward the speakers.

"Did you speak, Mr. Scott?" asked Perkins.

Watson Scott deliberately rose to his feet and joined them.

"I heard you mention Merriwell," he said. "There happened to be a lull in the yapping of those wolves,

and I caught some of the things you were saying. It's plain you don't think much of the fellow I depend on."

"To tell you the truth," admitted Jackson, "we don't."

"It strikes us," said Perkins, "that he's a four-flush."

"Uh-huh!" grunted Old Gripper, once more. "Well, I don't wonder much, but I assure you it's because you don't know him. That boy is a wizard. Gentlemen, he's never made a failure. I've taken pains to go back on his career and follow it down to the present time, and I can't put my finger on one spot where he has fizzled."

CHAPTER II.

THE ASSAULT ON THE WINDOW.

"Well, it's likely he's never been up against any very hard propositions," said Perkins.

"That's where you're wrong," contradicted Scott. "He has faced propositions which would have staggered almost any man. I can't tell you all I know about him, and it isn't necessary; but I saw him come out on top in the struggle against Porfias del Norte, a Mexican of high blood, who claimed the very territory in which Merriwell's San Pablo Mine is located, and produced proof that the territory had been granted him or his ancestors by the Mexican Government.

"If ever there was a human devil it was this Del Norte. He was ready for anything in order to accomplish his ends. He had money enough to secure the assistance of scoundrels of his ilk. Three times that man was killed, and three times that man returned to life. Once he was buried in a landslide in the Adirondacks. In some manner, he dug his way out; but he came forth with snow-white hair, and the face of an aged man. He took another name, calling himself Lazaro.

"As Lazaro, he started in to wipe out, not only Merriwell, but myself and all concerned in this railroad project. At the Waldorf-Astoria, in New York, he succeeded in poisoning me. Only the prompt action of a skilful physician saved my life. Mr. Hatch, who is also extensively interested in this road, was sent over a bank in his automobile, the machine being smashed into kindling-wood and twisted iron and steel. That was more of Del Norte's work. But Merriwell was after him and trapped him in an old building on the East Side. There was a brief struggle, during which a kerosene lamp was overturned, setting fire to the building. The firemen came, and, when they arrived, the whole structure was in a blaze. One minute before the floors fell in, Del Norte, or Lazaro, appeared in one of the upper windows. No human being saw him escape. It was believed he perished in the flames.

"He wasn't dead. He turned up again in Buffalo, and there, when trapped by the police through Merriwell's cleverness, he took poison. The man was pronounced dead by a reliable physician. His body was placed in a vault. From the vault it was removed by

some medical students, who carried him to a certain medical college and stretched him on a table in the dissecting-room. Even as they made the first incision to begin dissection, the man sat up and came to life. The poison taken by him was a South American drug that had made him appear to be dead.

"He followed Merriwell to California. In the end he was blown into a thousand pieces by the explosion of an automobile. The only recognizable part of him that was left was his head, which was torn from his body. Del Norte is dead, and Merriwell is operating his San Pablo Mine undisturbed."

"That's a heap interesting story, Mr. Scott," admitted Jackson; "but still it don't convince me that this Merriwell is able to cope with the situation here. Why, sir, didn't he fall into Tom Stockton's hands the very day he landed in Mesquite?"

"He did," admitted Old Gripper; "but how long did Stockton hold him? Didn't he turn the tables on Stockton and take that man captive?"

"But you know he didn't hold Stockton long," put in Perkins.

"That's true. Through the treachery of Stockton's guard, the gambler escaped. But Merriwell is after him."

Both Perkins and Jackson laughed in a repressed, derisive manner.

"How much good do you think it'll do Merriwell to chase Stockton down here in this country?" questioned Jackson. "No, no, Mr. Scott, you can't count on that chap. There's only one way to solve the trouble."

"And that is?"

"Those greasers and *peons* outside must be paid their money."

"I'll pay them as soon as I can get another pay train through here."

"You know promises won't satisfy them," said Perkins. "They've got to see the coin. Now if your man Merriwell could turn up with enough money to pay them off, why we'd both acknowledge that he was the real stuff. But that's impossible. We're cooped up here, and we can't get away. They know it. If they don't break in on us, they'll starve us out after awhile."

In spite of himself, Old Gripper groaned.

"I guess that's right," he nodded. "I'm pretty near starved out now. Never did seem to have such a beastly appetite, and this eating by spasms is poor business."

At this moment there came a sudden terrific pounding at one of the shuttered back windows, causing the station agent to leap to his feet and rush toward his companions in the greatest alarm.

"They're breaking in!" he cried. "They'll murder us all!"

Old Gripper surveyed the shivering fellow with a slight touch of disdain in his manner.

"You're in a bad way, Whiting," he said. "Are you bothered with malaria? I see you have the shakes."

"I know these murderous dogs!" panted Whiting. "They think nothing of cutting the throat of an Ameri-

can. Oh, why did I ever come down into this infernal country? I wish I had never seen it! I wish I had never heard of the Central Sonora Railroad!"

"Uh-huh!" grunted Scott. "We've got to have men with nerve down here. Evidently you're not the sort we want, Whiting. You'll have a pass back to the States. I'll see to that."

"Oh, yes! oh, yes!" cried Whiting. "That's all well enough to talk! What good will a pass back to the States do me if my throat is cut? How are we going to get out of this scrape? Can't you devise any way? Haven't you any power at all?"

"That will do!" growled Watson Scott. "No more of that from you!"

Then he turned to Perkins and Jackson.

"Those fellows are going to break in there in a minute," he said. "I think we'll have to shoot. I'm against shooting, but it may be necessary. Loan me a pistol, please."

"Do you know how to use a gun, Mr. Scott?" asked Perkins. "In a time of excitement a pistol in the hands of a novice in here might be more dangerous than all the greasers outside."

"Come! come!" said Old Gripper sharply. "If I didn't know how to use it, I wouldn't ask for it. I've shot deer in the Adirondacks, and I never yet made the mistake of shooting a guide or another deer-hunter."

Without further words, Perkins handed over a heavy Colt revolver. Old Gripper glanced at the chambers of the weapon, and revolved the cylinder to make sure it was loaded and in working order.

By this time Jackson was at the assaulted window. The heavy shutter was shaking beneath the blows. A board was splintered and flew off.

Instantly Jackson thrust the muzzle of a pistol through the opening thus made and fired once.

CHAPTER III.

THE RESCUE TRAIN.

That was enough. Outside there were yells of terror and dismay, and the battering at the window ceased.

"Did you hit any one?" questioned Old Gripper, who was at Perkins' shoulder when the shot was fired.

"I don't know," was the answer, as the man shrugged his shoulders. "I didn't try to. I turned the muzzle upward and fired high. I thought I might bluff them that way."

"Hark!" cried Whiting suddenly. "What's that?"

They all listened. Outside the building there was a lull. A moment later far, far away sounded the faint wailing shriek of a locomotive.

"By heavens!" cried Whiting, athrob with the wild-est excitement. "It's a train! There's a train coming! If I can ever get onto it! If I can ever get out of this infernal town—oh, say, watch me do it!"

There was a jabber of voices, which told that the mob knew the train was coming. In a few moments

the whistle sounded again, and this time it was much nearer.

Perkins began to undo the fastenings of a window shutter.

"Here! here!" cried Whiting. "What are you doing there? Don't open that shutter! They'll see it! They'll get in!"

"Oh, go to blazes!" retorted Perkins contemptuously. "I'm going to take a look down the track. That train is coming from the east. Perhaps Mulloy and some of his Irishmen are on it. If so, we want to stop the train here. With twenty fighting Irishmen we can stand off these greasers."

He opened the shutter slightly and peered forth. He could see down the track, which led away across the brown desert and dwindled into the distance. Far, far away a long line of smoke smuttily streaked the blue sky.

The strikers had swarmed to that side of the little station. Their backs were to the building, and their faces turned toward the east. They were watching for the train.

"Here, Whiting, you infernal coward," cried Perkins suddenly, "give me a red flag, and get it quick! We've got to stop that train."

The station agent hurriedly brought a flag and thrust it into the hand of Perkins.

By this time the locomotive was in view, and to it a single car was seen to be attached.

Quietly Perkins swung back the shutter of the window and unfolded the flag.

Behind him stood Jackson, with his rifle in his hands. Old Gripper was also there, holding the borrowed pistol ready for use.

Once more the sharp shriek of the locomotive cut the air.

At this point Perkins leaned from the window, lifted the red flag, and began to wave it aloft.

The jar and rumble of the train shook the little station slightly. It grew louder and louder.

"They're not going to stop!" faltered Whiting. "Oh, great Heaven, they're not going to stop!"

But now a series of toots from the locomotive told them that the red flag was seen. Up to the station panted the engine, coming to a stand, and down from the tender of the locomotive leaped a crowd of men, all armed in the most generous manner.

"Open that door, Whiting," commanded Watson Scott. "We're all right now."

"You bet we are!" grinned Perkins. "Barney Mulloy is there. He's acting as fireman on that engine. He's brought a lot of fighting men, and we can whip four times the number of greaser dogs there are outside."

With trembling hands, Whiting unlocked and unbarred the heavy door.

Old Gripper stepped boldly into the doorway as it was opened. An exclamation of surprise and satisfaction came from his lips, for down from the engine leaped a young man, who had been acting as engineer.

He was bareheaded and wore neither coat nor vest. His sleeves were rolled high above his elbows, exposing a pair of splendid arms. His face was soiled and sweaty, but his eyes glowed with triumph and satisfaction as he advanced toward the station door.

"It's Merriwell, by all the Olympian gods!" cried Watson Scott.

CHAPTER IV.

MERRIWELL PROVES HIMSELF.

"How are you, Mr. Scott?" said Frank.

"Howdy do, Merriwell," answered Old Gripper. "I'm quite well, considering. Can't seem to get clear of this rabble though. The only thing that will pacify them is money, and that I haven't got just now."

Frank smiled as he asked:

"How much do you need, sir?"

"Enough to pay these ugly dogs off. I'd give two dollars for every one I owe them if I could pay them to-day."

"You don't have to pay a bonus for your money, Mr. Scott," said Frank. "We've brought it in that car, and you can pay every laborer who has a legal demand upon you."

Old Gripper lifted his eyebrows slightly, a mild expression of surprise on his face.

"What do you mean, Merriwell?" he questioned. "I don't think I get you."

"Look out for that car, Barney," said Frank. "Keep watch of the engine, too. We mustn't take any chances here."

"Depind on me, Frankie, me bhoi," said Barney. "Av they git away with the boodle now, they'll have to wcipe out this bunch of Oirish tarriers."

"Don't-a forgit-a da Italians," grinned a son of sunny Italy.

"De colored guard am right here, too, sar," put in a negro. "We's bound to earn our money fo' dis job."

"All right," nodded Frank. "We'll step inside, Mr. Scott."

They entered the station. Instantly Whiting, the frightened station agent, seized Merriwell's arm and cried:

"Don't you dare pull out of here till I'm on board that train! I wouldn't stay here another day for the whole of Sonora!"

Merry turned and surveyed the fellow with a flashing glance.

"Evidently you have hoisted the white flag," he observed, endeavoring to repress a feeling of mingled pity and contempt for the man. "Is this one of your backers, Mr. Scott?"

Old Gripper snorted.

"That?" he grunted. "Not much! He's the station agent here. These men are my backers."

He jerked his thumb toward Perkins and Jackson.

"Oh, yes," nodded Merry. "I've met them before.

How are you, Perkins? Howdy do, Jackson? Seems you've taken good care of Mr. Scott."

"Well, we've done the best we could," answered Perkins. "I don't think we've taken very *good* care of him, but we've managed to stand the greasers off."

"We were speaking of you a few minutes ago, Merriwell," said Jackson.

"That's right," grunted Old Gripper. "These boys seemed to think that you were in a whole lot of trouble, and that you wouldn't succeed in making good."

"In other words," smiled Merry, "they fancied I'd bitten off more than I could chew. Well, it did look that way when Stockton roped me in Mesquite, but with the aid of a loyal friend I succeeded in turning the tables on him."

They had not fastened the door, and at this moment it was slowly pushed open to admit an old Indian, who stalked into the little room with a most dignified manner.

"Here, you!" burst from Jackson, as he whirled toward the redskin. "Get out of here! What in blazes do you mean by pushing in here this way?"

The old savage paused, with his dirty blanket about his shoulders, and his scintillating black eyes seemed to pierce Jackson through and through.

"White man heap big bluff," he grunted.

"So I'm a bluff, am I?" snapped Jackson. "Well, here's where I show you different. I just think I'll kick you out on your scalp-lock."

But, before he could lay a hand on the old redskin, Merriwell grasped his wrist, speaking swiftly and quietly.

"Please don't, Jackson," he said. "This is my faithful friend, to whom I owe a great deal."

Jackson betrayed surprise and muttered something under his breath.

"Mr. Scott," said Frank, "this is old Joe Crowfoot. When I tell you what I've accomplished through his assistance, you will realize how greatly you're indebted to him. A short time ago Stockton and a pack of his Wolves held up the pay train on this road and robbed it. Stockton hid the money in a cave amid the hills. After escaping from my hands, he gathered a band of men, bought horses and pack-mules, and started to move that money. He reached the vicinity of the cave at nightfall. Among the Mexicans and Indians there exists a superstition that this cave is haunted by the ghost of an old hermit who once lived in it. Therefore Stockton was unable to move the treasure at night. He camped with his men, intending to take the coin away the following day.

"Now it happened that, with the aid of old Joe Crowfoot, I had trailed Stockton to that spot. We watched their camp-fires, and saw them lead forth a captive whom they had doomed to death. This man was Pedro, the one who had aided me in escaping from Stockton's hands. Crowfoot and I followed Pedro and his two would-be slayers through the darkness to the brink of a deep ravine. One of the Mexicans lost his nerve, and left the other to do the bloody job. Just

as this other was on the point of stabbing Pedro, Crowfoot threw his knife at the wretch. The aim was accurate, and the Mexican flung up his arms and plunged into the ravine, uttering no more than a low, choking cry.

"Naturally Pedro was most grateful to us for saving his life. He knew where the Haunted Cave was and led us to it. We found the treasure hidden there. That night we appropriated Stockton's horses and pack-animals. Two of them escaped us after the picket-pins were drawn. The others were sufficient for our purpose, however, and we lost no time in getting the treasure out of the cave and packing it on the animals. When morning dawned we had a long start on the Mexicans and Stockton.

"Nevertheless, the escaping of the two horses we lost came near proving our undoing. Stockton must have secured those animals, and with them he rode to the nearest ranch, where he obtained mounts for the rest of his men. They pursued us all the way to the head of construction on this railroad. Toward the finish of the pursuit they pressed us hard and there was some shooting. They might have overwhelmed us had not Barney Mulloy and a number of armed laborers rushed out to our assistance. Stockton was baffled.

"Still the man is full of resourcefulness, and he did not give up at once. While we kept guard over the treasure, he plotted. When a train came through to the head of construction to-day we made arrangements to move the money and placed it in one of the cars, where it is now, with Ephraim Gallup inside as guard.

"But Stockton must have touched Bronson, the engineer, and his fireman, for we were not more than thirty miles from the head of construction when the fireman cut loose the car containing the money and the engineer attempted to carry me and the rest of the armed guard away. I managed to climb onto the top of the car, and then get onto the engine. Bronson fired half-a-dozen shots at me, but the engine was rocking and jumping so that I was in no particular danger. When he saw I was determined to reach him, he jumped from the engine.

"I have had some experience as a locomotive engineer, which was a lucky thing for us. I stopped the train and cut clear of the car, taking the men on the engine tender with me when I started back to recover the treasure car. We found Stockton and a gang trying to break into that car, but they mounted and got away in a hurry when they saw us coming.

"That's practically the whole story, Mr. Scott. We hooked onto the treasure car again, and there she is in front of the door, with the money safe inside. You can pay off the strikers as soon as you please, and settle one phase of the difficulty on this road."

As Old Gripper listened, a slight smile of satisfaction crept over his face. Once he glanced toward Perkins and Jackson and noted that both were mightily absorbed in Merriwell's story. Frank having finished, Scott grunted a bit and turned to his "body-guard."

"Well, boys," he said, "what do you think about Merriwell now?"

There was a momentary pause, and then Perkins exclaimed:

"If this yarn is true, sir, he is all you claim for him!"

"And a blamed sight more!" added Jackson emphatically.

CHAPTER V.

SCOTT'S CONFIDENCE.

One-half the treasure guard stood with loaded rifles in their hands, holding the strikers at a set distance, while the other half removed the sacks of coin into the little railway station.

Finally the task was completed, and the guard followed the last of the money-bearers inside the building. The door was closed and fastened.

"There, gol-dern my punkins!" said Gallup, with a sigh of relief, "I'm glad that job's over."

"There's your money, Mr. Scott," said Frank, with a motion toward the sacks. "I've promised these boys fifty dollars each for their part of the work. Was that right?"

"Perfectly," nodded Old Gripper. "They shall be paid at once."

"Dat suits us, boss," chuckled the negro.

"Say," put in an Italian, "dis-a da good-a biz. I like-a da job-a. I take-a it every time I git-a da fift' dol'."

"Jackson," said Scott, "you're paymaster. These men are the first to get what's due them. You may as well begin to pay them off at once."

"All right, sir," said Jackson. "Here, Whiting, you quivering craven, get that table yonder and shove it over here in front of this window. Move some."

"Hold on!" burst from the station agent, in sudden resentment. "I don't like this kind of talk, and I won't stand for it! If you want the table, get it yourself!"

Instantly Jackson whipped forth a pistol, which he pointed at Whiting, without lifting his hand from his side.

"Get that table," he said.

The station agent made an electrified leap, seized the table, and hastily moved it across the room, placing it in front of the window, as directed.

"Thanks," murmured Jackson. "Now you may go and lie down in the corner."

A bag of coin was lifted to the table and opened. Then the men who had guarded the treasure formed in line and filed past, while Jackson deftly counted out each one's portion.

While this was taking place, a murmur of voices again rose outside and gradually swelled into a clamorous uproar. The strikers were once more calling for their money.

Watson Scott drew Merry aside.

"Merriwell," he said, taking Frank's hand, "I'll not

forget this piece of work. You've pulled me out of a nasty hole, and I want you to know how much I appreciate it. I feel that——"

Gently but firmly Frank cut him short.

"Don't say anything more about it, Mr. Scott," he entreated. "You know I was working for my own interests as well as yours. The completion of this railroad means a great deal to me. It will double the value of my San Pablo Mine. Besides that, I'm pledged to take stock in the road."

The Wall Street magnate nodded.

"That's true enough," he said; "but I know of no other man who could have done the same thing under the same circumstances. There's only one thing I'm sorry about."

"And that is—what?"

"I'm sorry Tom Stockton escaped."

"I am, too," admitted Merry, "for I know he'll continue to harass you as long as possible. I shall give that man further attention, sir. As soon as this business is over and the strike is settled, I'll go out looking for Stockton—and I'll find him, too."

"That's dangerous business, Merriwell—dangerous business. The fellow knows you too well now, and he's doubly desperate. He's not one to stop at any crime. He'll hire assistants. Your life will be in constant peril. You must be cautious, young man. Really, come to consider it, I don't think it's right that you should take such chances. There are plenty of others ready to take them. Now look at this bunch who helped you bring the money through. They might be paid to go forth on the hunt for Stockton."

"They'd never get him, sir. The moment a band of armed men started out in search of The Wolf, his spies and satellites would post him in regard to the fact. If I go alone, or with a single companion, it'll be no easy task to keep track of my movements."

"Whom will you choose as a companion?"

Merriwell nodded toward old Joe Crowfoot, who was sitting on the floor, with his back against the wall, serenely and sedately smoking a black pipe.

"That Indian is worth more than a hundred men in a case like this," he said. "I shall take him. I shall search for Stockton in a manner new and novel down in this part of the country. I'm not going into details, Mr. Scott. I have my own plans, and I do not care to talk them over too much, for even a whisper may reach ears for which it was not intended. When I leave you here, I'm going to Hermisillo. There I expect to find something I ordered shipped to that point before I left the States. With the aid of this thing, I'll give Tom Stockton a run for his life. That's all I am going to say now."

There was something mysterious in Merriwell's words; yet if Old Gripper's curiosity was aroused, he refrained from showing it.

"Very well," he said; "I don't think you're a man who needs advice. I shall let you follow your own course. Hear those snarling dogs outside!"

Once more the strikers were howling around the lit-

tle building, but they refrained from making another assault on door or window, knowing those armed men were within.

"We'll quiet them as soon as we pay them off," said Frank.

Perkins approached and caught these words from Merriwell's lips.

"One of Stockton's special trouble-breeders is kicking up that rumpus," he explained. "He's the leader out there. They call him Manzanillo, and he's a big greaser with a scar on his left cheek. He don't want the men paid off. I'll guarantee he's both disappointed and disgusted, because we've this money here to pay with."

"We'll have to give special attention to Manzanillo," said Frank. "Evidently he's one of the men you don't need among your laborers."

"That's right," agreed Perkins. "Whoever is taken back, Manzanillo must be dropped."

"Jackson has the pay-roll, hasn't he?" asked Scott.

"Sure thing."

"Well, when this Manzanillo is given his money, see that his name is struck from the list. In fact, when those men are paid off, they all will practically be discharged. That will make it necessary to reengage such men as we want. There are several of Stockton's tools in that bunch, and we have no further use for them. Jackson is paymaster. Look here, Merriwell, I want you as hiring boss. I think you have a good estimation of character, and I'd rather depend on your judgment than that of any one else."

"I'm willing to do anything I can, Mr. Scott; but it might be a good idea for Perkins and Jackson to tip me off to the worst characters in the gang."

"You can sling a little greaser gab, can't you, Mr. Merriwell?" asked Perkins.

"I think I can talk Spanish well enough for them to understand me."

"Then you might give them a piece of chin before we start in to pay them."

"Good idea," grunted Watson Scott. "We'll pay them through that window. When the window is opened, you can step into it and explain the situation. Tell them how Stockton was responsible for the trouble, and how he has fizzled. Tell them that each and every man shall receive his just dues, and that when they are paid no one of them will remain an employee of the company. Explain that those who wish to go back to work must make application at once, and such as we desire to take we will accept."

"All right, Mr. Scott," nodded Frank. "I'm ready when Jackson is."

Jackson caught his name as it fell from Frank's lips, and seemed to understand what was said.

"I'm ready now," he declared. "These boys are paid and satisfied. Now we can give our attention to the dogs out yonder."

Swiftly Frank picked out eight men from the treasure guard and lined them up in front of the window, with rifles in their hands.

"They'll have a soothing influence on the mob," he smiled. "Besides that, when the greasers see them ready for business, no man coming up to the window will make any attempt to get hold of money that is not his due. Here are two other boys who will pick up the sacks and place them on the table as fast as Jackson needs them. Jackson has his pay-roll before him. I think we're all right now, aren't we?"

"All right," said Jackson.

"Then open the window," directed Merriwell.

CHAPTER VI.

MERRIWELL QUIETS MANZANILLO.

The shutters were thrown open.

There was a sudden lull in the babel of voices outside. The mob looking in at the window saw the line of armed men standing back of a square wooden table, upon which was an open leather sack. Beside this table stood Joe Jackson, with his hands on his hips.

Merriwell paused a few moments in order that this sight might impress the strikers, and then he stepped boldly into the window.

Instantly a tall, fierce-looking Mexican, with an ugly scar running down his left cheek, rose head and shoulders above the crowd outside and shouted:

"Give us our money, you gringo robbers!"

Merry fixed the fellow with a piercing eye.

"That is Manzanillo," he thought.

Calmly he lifted a hand in a gesture calling for silence. Then he spoke swiftly and without hesitation in the language that the rabble could best understand. He wasted not a word in making the explanation decided upon. In conclusion he told them that the proof of the company's honesty would be evident to every one when they were paid off, which should take place at once. They were to form in line and file past the window, each man calling his name as he came up.

"We must have money, gringo robbers—money!" yelled Manzanillo. "They will cheat you, comrades! Be careful!"

Two or three others echoed these cries, but the majority were eager to get in line and receive their pay.

"Hold, comrades!" cried the Mexican with the scar. "He has said that when we are paid we'll no longer be employed by the road! This is not justice! We want justice, as well as money."

"You'll get it, Manzanillo," said Frank. "You and your companions quit work voluntarily. When you did so, you practically discharged yourselves. From the hour you laid down your tools you were no longer in the employ of the Central Sonora."

"He means that he will not pay us for the time we have lost while waiting for our money!" roared Manzanillo.

At this there were several sharp outcries and a general dissatisfied murmuring.

"That is precisely what I mean," said Frank. "By

your action you have put the company to great trouble and expense. Nevertheless, we are satisfied that the majority of you were led into this thing unthinkingly. We are satisfied that the majority of you are honest and willing laborers, and every honest man will be re-employed here and now after you are paid. The rascals and rioters, and all who have incited others to make trouble, will not be taken back."

Naturally this did not suit Manzanillo, and the fellow did his best to prevent any of the men from marching up to the window and getting their money. He furiously pushed his way through the throng toward that window, yelling at them to keep back, and swearing that he would compel the company to pay them regular wages, not only for the time they had worked, but for the time they had lost since striking.

"I think we'll have to shoot that whelp, Mr. Merriwell," muttered Jackson. "It's the only way to quiet him, and we can't handle the others until he is suppressed."

Frank did not answer. Instead of that, still watching the man with the scar, he called:

"Manzanillo, come here. We will settle with you first."

"You shall!" snarled the leader of the mob; "and you'll pay me what I demand!"

In a low tone Merry spoke to Barney Mulloy, who was standing a few feet away and close to the wall at one side of the window.

"Barney," he said, "I want you to be ready to close the shutter on that side and close it instantly. Have Gallup, or some one else, prepare to close the opposite shutter. You know when to act."

"All roight, Frankie, me bhoy," answered Barney.

Gallup had been listening, and he quickly placed himself on the opposite side.

"I'm right here, by hemlock!" he said. "Yeou can depend on me, Frank."

By this time Manzanillo had crowded his way up to the window.

"Give me my money, you white-livered, cheating gringo!" he raged. "It is now eight days since we should have been paid. You must pay us for those days which we have lost."

"Are you ready to pay him, Jackson?" asked Frank.

"Sure," answered Jackson. "I have it right here."

"Then hand it to him and strike his name from the list."

"Here you are, Manzanillo," said the paymaster, as he pushed out the money. "This is your exact due for labor performed. Take it and get out of this, for you'll get no more."

The tall Mexican seized the money, but an instant later he flung it into Jackson's face.

"*Santissima!*" he snarled. "*Car-r-r-ramba! Car-aj—*"

This vile word was cut short in his throat when Merriwell's hand flashed forth from the window and clutched his collar. An instant later, with a snap of his heels, Manzanillo disappeared through the window,

being jerked in with one powerful surge of Frank's arm.

Slam!—went the shutters.

Never before in all his career had Manzanillo met such a surprise. Nevertheless, he recovered swiftly and attempted to tear himself free from Merriwell's hands, at the same time cursing furiously.

Two or three of the men sprang to assist Frank, but instantly he warned them off.

"Stand back!" he cried. "Give me plenty of room, that's all I ask."

"I'll give you this, you gringo dog!" palpitated the man with the scar, as his hand flashed forth a knife.

Instantly his wrist was seized and twisted until the bones cracked. With a cry of pain, he dropped the knife, which fell with a clang to the cemented floor.

Manzanillo was a powerful man, and, being thus disarmed, he attempted to grapple with the young American. Without releasing the man's wrist, Frank turned suddenly, bringing the fellow's arm across his shoulder, and an instant later Manzanillo's heels once more whizzed through the air, as he was sent whirling over Frank's head.

He struck the hard floor with a shock that knocked the breath out of him, and in a twinkling Frank had pinned him there, one arm being straightened out and twisted backward, while Merry grasped the Mexican's chin on the opposite side and twisted his head round.

It was a jiu-jitsu hold, and the ruffian was as helpless as a baby in Merriwell's hands.

All through this, Old Gripper had stood with his hands in his pockets, and watched what was taking place. The grim smile habitual with him whenever he displayed the slightest amusement now settled on his face.

"That was rather neatly done," he muttered.

"Yeou bet your boots, Mr. Scott!" laughed Ephraim Gallup. "When Frank Merriwell takes holt of a feller and means business, he does the job in double-quick time. I rather guess Mr. Manzanillo will soople down a leetle."

"Phwat d'yez nade, Frankie?" questioned Mulloy. "Kin Oi help yez iny?"

"Not at present, Barney," said Frank, as he pressed his knee into the small of the Mexican's back and kept the fellow from squirming. "I'll talk to him a bit."

"I'll cut your heart out!" panted the helpless ruffian.

"Oh, no, you won't," said Frank. "You'll not harm any one, Manzanillo. You can't, no matter how much you want to. You're one of Stockton's tools. He has paid you to keep up the trouble. You know that you and the others outside are getting your just dues when you receive pay for the work performed. Without you to urge them on, they would accept the money and be satisfied. You won't urge them on any more to-day."

"When I get up you shall see!" hissed the Mexican.

"You're foolish to make such talk. Do you think we're going to let you out there again? If you do, you're much mistaken. You'll stay in here until we

transact this business. After we're done, I'm going to take you on to Hermisillo with me."

"You have no right! I will not go!"

"Oh, yes, you will. Perhaps you may not want to go, but go you will all the same. We're going to tie your arms behind your back, and set you in a corner. I just want to give you warning. If you keep quiet, we won't gag you; but if you lift your voice in as much as a murmur, we'll put a gag between your teeth. Now, Barney, kindly bring me some rope."

Old Joe Crowfoot had risen and put up his pipe. As Merry glanced up he saw the old Indian with a long knife in his hand, deftly running his wrinkled thumb along the edge of it. Crowfoot caught Merry's eye.

"Ugh!" grunted Joe. "Greaser man heap much bother. Strong Heart him have much prejudice. Crowfoot him have none. Crowfoot him fix greaser man so him keep very still, very still. Greaser man he have fine scalp. Crowfoot him like it much."

Bob Perkins laughed heartily.

"That sure would be a simple way to settle the matter," he observed. "Better turn him over to the Injun."

"It would be the worst thing in the world for the company, even if I were willing," said Frank. "That is not my method in disposing of troublesome enemies. No, Crowfoot, you'll do no scalping to-day."

"Waugh!" snorted the old redskin, in deep disgust.

He turned away and again sat down on the floor, with his back against the wall, refilling and relighting his old pipe.

Manzanillo found it impossible to make much of a struggle when they attempted to bind him, and soon he was dragged into a corner and left there, his black eyes shing murderously, and his features working with the rage that burned in his bosom.

Again the mob was howling outside, but fear of the armed men within prevented them from assaulting the shuttered window.

"Now, Jackson," said Frank, "you may continue paying those men off, and I think they'll all take their money."

CHAPTER VII.

TWO PANTHERISH MEN.

The crowd outside was told that Manzanillo was a captive and unarmed. They were assured that he would receive no bodily injury, and once more they were directed to file past the window and get their money.

There was great eagerness to crowd up to that window, but several of the cooler-headed ones began to marshal their companions into line, and soon the strikers were filing past the window.

As fast as Jackson paid a man off, Merriwell put a cross against that man's name on the list.

A few asked if they were not to receive pay for the time they had been waiting since going on strike, but

accepted the money when assured that they would receive nothing but what was due them for labor.

More than a hundred men, whose names were on the list, failed to appear at the window. These men were not in Espita.

When the last of the mob had filed past and received his pay, three sacks of coin remained untouched.

The crowd was very quiet now. They gathered in little groups and jabbered softly in Spanish. They were talking over the situation and wondering who would be taken back into the employ of the railroad constructors. There were no further threats and no demonstrations.

"Barney," said Frank, "I think it will be safe for you to go out there now and get up steam again. By the time we've run through this list once more and re-employed such men as Mr. Scott wants, it will be dark. We will then pull out for Hermisillo."

"All roight, Frankie," answered the young Irishman. "Whin yez want to move, ye'll foind things ready."

The station door was opened, and Mulloy crossed the platform and climbed upon the engine.

"What are your plans, Mr. Scott?" asked Merry.

"If I can get anything to eat, I'll stay here," answered Old Gripper. "You can leave these boys with me. I don't suppose you'll need any of them on the train?"

"As we carry no money, we'll not need them," answered Frank. "I'll send a train through in the morning to take the reemployed laborers back to the head of construction."

"Won't you come with that train?"

"I think not."

"Why not?"

"I expect to come back by other conveyance. That's my secret just now, Mr. Scott."

"All right, all right; I'm not prying. But we'll have to hustle through with the rest of the business here, if you wish to pull out by dark."

Once more Merriwell spoke to the strikers, who now listened in respectful silence. He invited them to again file past the window and call their names, upon which they would be told whether the company wished to reemploy them. Those who did not care to resume work on the road were asked not to get into line with the applicants.

Immediately there was a rush, which seemed to indicate that the men were as eager to resume work as they had been to secure the money due them. Frank sat at one end of the table, with the pay-roll before him, keenly studying the features of each applicant who came up. At his back were Gallup and Jackson, both of whom gave him points in regard to the men.

This piece of work went through swiftly and smoothly, although Merriwell declined to reemploy four men who applied, even though neither Gallup nor Jackson made any objection to them. On his own judgment Frank decided that those men were unre-

liable and dangerous, and, therefore, he informed them that the construction company would not need them further.

Others were refused on the advice of Perkins or Jackson.

It was almost too dark to see the names on the list when the last of the applicants filed past the window.

"There," said Merriwell, throwing down his pencil, "that is done. Now, if Mulloy is ready, we'll get out of here."

Barney came hurrying in and placed a hand on Frank's shoulder, leaning close to whisper in his ear.

"Frankie, Oi think we'd better shkip loively. It's me opinion there's something doing."

"What do you mean?"

"Oi saw eight or tin av thim grasers thot yez didn't take back a-sloding up the track in the dark. The divvil knows what they're up to. Mebbe they mane to yank up a rail and ditch us."

"But they haven't tools to take up a rail."

"All the same, they mane to foind a way to ditch us av we don't git to going in a hurry."

"Then we'll get a-going," said Frank. "So long, Mr. Scott. So long, boys. Come on with us, Gallup."

He turned to a dark figure in a corner.

"Two or three of you take hold of our friend Manzanillo and bring him out, boys," he directed. "Crowfoot, where are you?"

"Here," answered the old Indian, appearing like a dark ghost.

"Get onto the train, Joe, if you're traveling with us."

Manzanillo made no protest as they lifted him and carried him from the station.

"Toss him in this car," said Merry. "You can watch him, Gallup. Crowfoot will stay with you. Barney I take the engine."

The Mexican was flung into the box car, and the old Indian sprang after him with the agility of a youth. Then Gallup climbed in, and the door was closed with a grating sound.

Whiting, the station agent, had recovered his nerve and did not leave the station.

"I think they mean to take Manzanillo away from us," said Frank, in Mulloy's ear. "That's why those men sneaked up the track. They'll seek to board us before we can get under good headway. Have you plenty of steam?"

"Listen to thot, me bhoy," chuckled Mulloy, as the exhaust of the engine suddenly broke loose with a terrific hissing and rumbling sound.

"Good enough! Just open her out for all she's worth, and we'll take chances on that displaced rail. At the same time, we better keep down in the cab."

"Oi understhand," nodded the Irish youth.

The headlight of the locomotive was sending a glare out upon the track in advance. The engine bell clanged, the whistle shrieked, and the wheels began to revolve. Merriwell's hand was on the throttle.

Standing on the platform, Jackson and Perkins

waved their hats and uttered a cheer, which was taken up by the others who had helped Merry bring the company's money safely through to Espita, and in which the strikers finally joined with shrill cries.

The train pulled out from the station, swiftly gaining headway as it rumbled and clanged into the night-shroud that lay dense on the plain.

"Keep low, Barney," cautioned Frank. "Let's not make targets of ourselves in case any of those ruffians are waiting to try a few snaps at us."

Barely had he spoken these words when up from the side of the track shot a figure with up-flung hands, which grasped the iron hand-rail of the locomotive and clung there. A pantherish spring had enabled a man to land on the iron step.

An instant later, on the opposite side of the engine, another man sprang at the hand-rail and clutched it, seeming to dangle in the air for a moment as he swung onto the step.

This was accomplished so skilfully and silently that neither Frank nor Barney observed the men. Merriwell's eyes were fastened on the steam gage. Barney was waiting to open the roaring furnace and throw in another sprinkling of coal.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS FLYING LIGHT.

Simultaneously the two figures lifted themselves on the steps and made a leap into the cab.

Something—some strange premonition of danger—caused Frank Merriwell to turn his head, and the light of the engine lamp revealed two bareheaded Mexicans, both of whom had flashed forth a gleaming knife.

Now it happened that, in crouching down a few moments before, Merry had noticed a small iron wrench on the floor of the cab and picked it up, with the intention of returning it to the tool-box. This wrench was in his hand when he looked round and discovered the Mexicans.

Like a flash, he wheeled and hurled the wrench straight at the face of one of the men.

It struck the fellow and knocked him backward against the tender.

Merry did not pause, but made one swift spring, clutching at the wrist of the other man. In a twinkling he secured a hold which prevented the scoundrel from using his knife. Then Frank twisted the wretch about, grasped him with his left hand, and pitched him headlong from the rumbling engine.

The Mexican uttered a cry as he was hurled into the darkness.

When Merry turned to give further attention to the fellow struck by the wrench, he found Mulloy already upon the rascal, and in short order the Irish youth followed Frank's example, hurling the second Mexican from the locomotive.

"Begorra," cried Barney, "it's a foiner thing ye saw

thim, Frankie, me bhoy! How the divvil did they board us?"

"They must have jumped on before we gained headway enough to prevent them from doing so," said Frank. "Something made me look round. If I hadn't turned just when I did, you and I would have felt steel between our ribs."

In the darkness at a little distance there was a sudden flash of fire, the crack of a rifle reached their ears, and a bullet kissed Merry's cheek as it passed.

"Into the cab again!" exclaimed Frank. "They're lined out along the track, and they'll all try to pot us."

He was right, for other shots followed. Bullets flattened against the ironwork of the engine and shattered the windows of the cab. They heard yells of disappointment and rage as the engine and attached car went humming and rocking on over the unsettled road-bed.

"Hear them yap, Frankie," grinned the Irish youth. "They're disappointed, Oi take it."

"Rather," said Merry. "They expected the two men who boarded the engine to dispose of us and stop the train. I don't think we need to fear obstruction or displaced rails."

Soon there was no further shooting, and finally Frank and Barney rose from their places of shelter, and Merry took his position, with a hand on the throttle, his eyes fixed on the gleaming rails ahead of the locomotive. Barney yanked open the furnace door and seized a shovel, with which he skilfully flirted in a few shovelfuls of coal.

"We're afther coming to the level plains north av the Yaqui River, Frankie," observed the Irish youth. "They stritch away as smooth as the floors of a house for moiles, and moiles, and moiles. There's nivver a dhrap of water and nivver a blade of real grass; nothing but sand and catci, wid occasional bunches av greasewood. It's Satan's own counthry to build a railroad through at this s'ason of the year. In summer it must be fierce. A real whoite man couldn't live in it."

Thirty or forty minutes later Frank spoke to his companion.

"See here, Barney," he said, "I wish you'd take a look at this light and see what you can make of it."

"Phwere?"

"Yonder to the north. I've been watching it for five minutes now."

At a distance, and slightly to the rear, a bright light seemed racing across the desert at a rate of speed fully equal to that maintained by the locomotive. It was traveling in the same direction.

Mulloy screwed up his face into a puzzled expression.

"Howly Saint Patrick!" he exclaimed. "It do be going some. Whoy, Frankie, it's kapin' up wid us."

"It has gained on us," declared Merry. "When I first discovered it, it was farther away."

"Well, wouldn't thot bate yez! Phwat do yez think it is?"

"That's what I'm asking you, Mulloy."

"Oi'll nivver tell, for faith Oi dunno. It sames loike the ould bhoy himsilf in pursuit av us."

"No living thing of flesh and blood could travel as fast as that," asserted Merriwell.

"Do yez think the ould bhoy is made of flesh and blud?"

In spite of his intelligence, the Irish youth was inclined to be superstitious, and Frank knew the strange flying light, which seemed to skim along just above the surface of the level plain, had aroused Barney's fears.

"Can't yez put on a litthle more spade, Frankie?" cried Mulloy. "Let's be afther running away from it av we kin."

"We're hitting it up altogether too fast for safety over these rails," answered Merry. "I don't feel like jumping the track, and piling up in the ditch."

"Oi'd rather take me chances on thot than to fall into the clutches of the ould bhoy!" palpitated the Irish youth. "See, Frankie, on me soul she's gitting nearer and nearer! She'll be afther catching us in a few minutes at this rate."

"That's right," admitted Merry; "and, between you and me, I'm anxious for the thing to overtake us and come alongside where I can take a look at it."

In spite of their speed, the strange light steadily crept nearer.

"There's only one explanation," muttered Merry. "It seems impossible, but it must be true. Some one besides me has thought of using such a thing down in this country."

"Phwat are yez saying, Frankie?" anxiously demanded Barney, turning from the furnace, into which he had thrust more coal. "Begorra, it's nearer! It'll have us directly!"

"Can you make out anything besides the light, Mulloy? Can't you detect a shape of some sort?"

"It sames to me Oi kin, but Oi can't just tell phwat it looks loike."

The light was now barely a few rods away and steadily bearing in toward the locomotive. No further words passed between Frank and Barney as they watched the gleaming thing close in upon them.

"It's a search-light, sure as fate," thought Frank. "I must be right about it."

Gradually he made out the outlines of the flying conveyance which bore the powerful search-light. It was a low car of some sort. Finally he was certain he could discern two figures in the car. Soon after this the light pushed forward, and the car and figures became more and more distinct. At last it was even with the cab of the locomotive and barely two rods away.

Frank's hand fell on Mulloy's arm.

"It's an automobile, Barney," he said.

"Phwat?" shouted the Irish youth. "Who the divvil would be afther running an automobile down here? Still it's plain you're roight, Frankie. Thot's phwat it is. Begorra, it's a relafe to know it. Loie shtill,

me palpitatin' heart, loie shtill! You came near chokin' me awhoile ago."

"See!" exclaimed Frank. "They're trying to signal us! Look! By Jove, Barney, there's a woman in that automobile! She's waving something white at us."

"A foine eye yez have for the ladies, Frankie. Ye kin always till one av thim wheriver and whiniver ye see her."

Suddenly a strange sharp signal blast came from the automobile.

Merry seized the whistle cord and answered it. Then he closed the throttle, and Mulloy sprang at the brake.

They began to slow down with a jarring, grating sound, which told that the shoes were biting the wheels.

At the same time the automobile slackened speed, and finally the machine on the rails and the machine at the roadside came to a stop.

"Frank!" cried a voice that caused Merry's heart to leap and thrill him through and through. "Frank, I know it must be you!"

"By Heaven!" he cried. "It is Inza, my wife!"

CHAPTER IX.

A STRANGE REUNION.

One leap took him to the ground. A moment later he had her clasped in his arms.

"Oh, Frank!" she sobbed; "oh, Frank, I'm so glad!"

"Of all the marvels this is the greatest!" said Merry, when he had kissed her again and again. "I left you in Tucson."

"But I couldn't stay there, Frank—I couldn't stay. Every day I thought of you, and every night I dreamed of you. Something told me you were in fearful danger. It was killing me, and I had to come—I had to come."

"But to meet you like this—I don't understand it. This automobile——"

"Is your own."

"Mine?"

"Yes."

"Still I don't understand."

"You ordered it to Hermisillo. It was there when I arrived in the place, and Bart Hodge was getting it ready for use."

"Bart Hodge?"

"That's me!" cried the driver of the automobile, removing the huge goggles from his eyes and seizing Merry's hand. "How are you, Frank?"

"Hodge!" shouted Merry, his astonishment complete. "Why, I knew you were coming, Bart, but I didn't dream of meeting you like this!"

"I suppose not," said Bart Hodge. "I took a few liberties with your auto, Merriwell. When I reached Hermisillo I was told that your railroad was in all sorts of trouble. Trains were not running. You were out here somewhere on the line. I decided the

best way to reach you was to appropriate your machine. I hope you'll pardon me."

"Pardon you? Why, bless your soul, you've given me a most delightful surprise. At the same time, I'm sorry Inza came down here, for there really is no end of trouble, and it's a poor place for a woman."

"My place is with you, Frank," she declared. "I can face trouble, and danger does not daunt me."

"Begorra," cried Mulloy, "she's the same narvy little girrül we used to know at Fardale!"

"Oh, it's Barney! it's Barney!" cried Inza. "You dear old Barney!"

"That's right," laughed Merry. "Hug him! kiss him! I'm not jealous."

"Waal, gol-darn my punkins! where dew I come in on this yere business? I kinder guess she owes me one smack for old times."

The speaker was Gallup, who had left the box car and approached the auto.

"Ephraim Gallup," laughed Inza, "is it really you?"

"You bate! Here I be, as large as life and twice as natteral. How aire you, Inza? Say, by hemlock! this is a regular reunion, ain't it?"

"Who's this?" breathed Inza, with a start, as a tall figure slowly advanced out of the darkness and paused a few feet away. "Why—why, it's an Indian!"

It was an Indian, and he stood regarding her gravely with a pair of piercing black eyes. After a moment he grunted in a satisfied manner, and observed:

"Night Eyes heap more handsome than ever. Much fine squaw."

Frank continued to laugh.

"Don't you know him, Inza? You ought to."

"Good gracious! it's old Joe Crowfoot!" burst from the lips of the girl. "Of course I know him. How could I ever forget him!"

She seized the old Indian's hand and gave it a warm pressure.

"Injun no kiss um white squaw," said Joe. "Him heap old, heap homely. White squaw no like homely old Injun to kiss um. Mebbe sometime long year ago, when Joe he young, he handsome, he great brave—mebbe then, if white squaw, Night Eyes, see him, she no make a fuss if he kiss her."

In spite of her natural repugnance for such a salutation from the old redskin, Inza said:

"She won't make a fuss now, Joe."

Frank knew how much it cost her to speak thus, and he was proud of her for her brave words. But, to the surprise of all, Crowfoot seemed to understand and drew back a step.

"No, no," he said, with a touch of mingled sadness and dignity, "Injun him no fool. Night Eyes take Crowfoot's hand. Him think that do. Him satisfied. Bimeby sometime when Night Eyes have little papoose mebbe Joe him kiss papoose. No can tell. Night Eyes no hurry up, mebbe old Joe he be dead."

The darkness hid Inza's blushes.

Regardless of passing time, they stood there talking earnestly and rapidly coming to an understanding.

Still it was not easy to shake off the sensation of wonderment produced by this strange and unexpected reunion.

Briefly Frank related his adventures since coming into Mexico. Although he made light of the dangers through which he had passed, Inza repeatedly declared that something had told her over and over that he was in great peril.

"You mustn't blame me for coming, Frank," she said, half beseechingly. "I couldn't stay away. I'm glad you've succeeded in settling the difficulties of the railroad."

"Oh, they're not wholly settled yet, nor will they be while Tom Stockton remains at liberty."

"There's a man in Hermisillo who wants to see Stockton," declared Hodge. "I had a talk with him. His name is Roland. Stockton killed his brother in El Paso. Roland has been looking for Stockton ever since. If they meet, there'll be some gun play."

"Begobs, I hope they mate soon and Roland pulls his gun foirst," said Barney. "Thot would be an aisy way of settling the throuble."

"What are we going to do with Inza, Merry?" questioned Hodge. "Shall I take her back to Hermisillo?"

"It might be a good plan for the present," said Frank.

"Say, gol-ding it!" put in Gallup, "why don't you take her out to the old don's ranch? Teresa is there, and she'd be made right to hum."

"That's a good idea, Gallup," nodded Merry. "I think I'll make Don Juan's home my headquarters, but first we must go on to Hermisillo. You'll have to stay with her in the auto, Bart, for I must drive this engine."

This was the plan finally agreed upon.

CHAPTER X.

THE CAMP ON THE YAQUI.

A week later.

On the open plains north of the Yaqui River several camp-fires burned at nightfall. Around these fires were gathered groups of wild and reckless-looking men. There were full-blooded Mexicans, men of mixed blood and a few Indians.

They had cooked their coffee on the coals of the fires, and eaten the evening meal. Now they were reclining lazily on blankets and serapes, while they smoked cigarettes and chatted. Two small groups were playing cards for money.

Apart from the others, a slender, blond-mustached man paced up and down, apparently in deep meditation. Occasionally he paused to survey the wild-looking band.

"To look at them," he muttered, "one would say they'd face the devil and all his imps; but I know them, and I know that, taken for what they're worth, they're the biggest lot of cowards on the face of this earth."

Give them the advantage, and they'll plunder and butcher with the utmost delight. They'll fight, too, until the tide of battle turns against them. The moment panic seizes them, they'll run like rabbits. Give me half as many American bravos, equally as well armed and as willing to obey my orders, and I'd stop the Central Sonora where it is. Never another rail should be laid. I'm going to try it with these dogs. It's a desperate game, but I'm going to play it to the finish. If I fail, the government will give me time enough to get away. If I succeed—well, I'll have money sufficient to take me out of the country, and I can live in other lands awhile."

The firelight gleamed on two rows of pointed white teeth as the speaker paused and smiled over the thought.

"It's the biggest game of your life, Tom Stockton," he finally went on, speaking to himself. "You've had money, but you've never had enough. What is twenty or thirty thousand dollars? A man can lose that in an hour, if he plunges at faro. He can blow it all in a week on a pretty woman. No more foolishness over women for me! I had enough of that in Texas. I'm pretty sharp, I fancy, but she played me for a sucker. She cleaned me out, and then came the trouble with Rob Roland. Well, he missed me when he fired, and they planted him in the morning. They say Bill Roland has sworn to avenge the death of his brother. Bill's a bad man. He has a record. Still, the best of 'em get up against it at last, and I'm tired of worrying over Bill. If we meet, I'll take my chances, and mebbe they'll plant him as they did Rob."

He frowned as he deftly rolled and lighted a cigarette.

"Speaking of bad men," he continued, "the worst I've yet encountered is this fellow Merriwell. He's not a gun-fighter, but he knows how to fight in a different way. Curse him! He's made me more trouble than all other enemies I ever encountered. Just when I had everything coming to suit me, this fellow turned up and spoiled all my plans. I hate to confess it, even to myself, but he's beaten me in a shameful manner. He actually took that stolen treasure away from me. That's what galls me worst of all. I can't get over that. I swear I'll make him pay for it yet!

"Now I have a double object in this fight against this railroad. Defeating the railroad builders won't fully satisfy me. I must crush this Merriwell! I must wring him dry of his last drop of blood! Then I'll be content. What has he done with Manzanillo? That man was valuable to me. Merriwell had the nerve to pack Manzanillo off to Hermisillo, and not a trace of him can I find. You think yourself pretty smart, Mr. Merriwell, and the cards have run for you so far, but I'm going to take my turn at dealing, and you'll find out that no smooth-faced stripling can beat Tom Stockton at his own game!"

Quietly puffing at the cigarette, the man sauntered amid the camp-fires, pausing occasionally to listen to the talk of the chattering desperadoes. He halted near

five Indians, who were talking with some show of excitement. A moment later he beckoned to a young Mexican, who approached deferentially.

"Pacheco," he said, "do you understand this lingo?"

"*Si, señor,*" nodded the boy, "I savvy it some."

"Then, listen. Tell me what they are talking about?"

"Señor Chief, they are talking about the thing that all these men speak of often."

"What's that?"

"The strange gleaming light that flies across the plains at night. The fearsome thing that shrieks like a demon and turns one's blood to ice. They have seen the light. They have heard the demon shriek."

Stockton shrugged his shoulders.

"Superstitious fools!" he muttered. "What do they think it is?"

"No one knows, señor. It is a frightful thing! They call it the 'Flying Fear.'"

"I've heard some of the fools jabbering about this thing. Has no one seen more than the light?"

"*Si, señor,* one or two of them have seen a white shape that sped over the ground like the very wind. One man ventured to fire at it, but it flew on untouched. The Indians say it is the Evil Spirit."

Stockton laughed in a low, sneering manner.

"That's the trouble with these men!" he growled. "They are full of superstitions and fears. You can't depend on them. Pacheco, are you afraid of this thing?"

"I have not seen it, señor."

"Boy, you are frightened already. Even though you have not seen it, you fear it. What folly! Who has been harmed by it? I'll guarantee that, when the truth is known, it's a most ordinary thing."

"It may be, señor, but you will have to convince the boys before you rob them of their fear for it."

Stockton turned away, again shrugging his shoulders. A moment later he paused where he could hear some Mexicans talking swiftly and excitedly in the soft mongrel Spanish with which their tongues were so familiar. They, too, were speaking of the thing called by the Indians the "Flying Fear." They, too, were afraid of this mysterious something that sped like the wind across the plains, having one burning eye that pierced far into the night, and possessing a voice that could be heard for miles.

"The fools!" was all that Stockton said, as he resumed his walk.

At the edge of the camp he paused and listened. Directly he was joined by two Indians, who also listened. In a moment one of them dropped flat upon the ground, close to which he lowered his ear. After a few moments this man rose with a grunt, saying:

"Horseman come."

"One or more?" asked Stockton.

"One."

In a short time the rhythm of beating hoofs could be distinctly heard. The sound came nearer and

nearer, and finally out of the darkness rode a man, who drew rein in front of Stockton and leaped to the ground.

CHAPTER XI.

THE "FLYING FEAR."

"Tony!" cried the leader of the desperadoes, "is it you?"

"*Si, señor,*" answered the newcomer.

"Well, it's time you came. What has kept you so long?"

"I have been even to Hermisillo. You told me to find out what had become of Manzanillo."

"And you have learned?"

"*Si, señor.*"

"Where is he?"

"He's gone to the coast. He has there taken ship for South America."

"The devil! Are you certain of this?"

"Certain, señor."

"Well, how did he happen to do such a thing?"

"He was paid."

"Paid?"

"Even so. The railroad men bought him off. They gave him money, and he promised to leave the country for a year."

After a moment, Stockton burst into laughter.

"Well, if that's their game, it will cost them something to buy us all off. When they get through, the company will be bankrupt. What of Merriwell?"

"He left Hermisillo the night following the morning of his arrival. How he went no one can say, but I have it as the truth that he has gone to the *hacienda* of Don Juan Espinazo. That is not all, Señor Chief. They say his wife is with him."

"His wife?"

"*Si, señor.* And they tell me she is most beautiful."

"His wife," repeated Stockton. "That's strange. Why should he bring his wife down here?"

"A question I cannot answer, chief. She is here; that's all I know."

The Wolf meditated.

"His wife," he finally muttered for the third time. "She is down here. She is at Don Juan's ranch. I see the vulnerable point in Merriwell's armor, and I'll strike at it. I knew the youngster would make some false step. Through his wife I'll reach him and crush him. You're back just in time, Tony. Take a look at these men. We shall move before daybreak to-morrow."

"With what purpose, chief?"

"They are again at work building the railroad. By nightfall to-morrow we strike at the laborers. It is my object to attack them while they are a long distance from the tents, and, therefore, unarmed. They fancy I'm defeated. They'll not be expecting a move like this."

"It is a big and dangerous thing, chief," murmured

Tony, shaking his head. "The railroad company will make complaint to the government. Troops will be sent. If it is known that you led the attack, a price will be put on your head. Every man who takes part in it will be marked. We'll all become fugitives."

"Not so fast, boy," cut in The Wolf. "It's about time that the Yaquis broke loose and took to the war-path. They've been comparatively quiet for some time. We'll attack the laborers, but every man of us will be disguised as an Indian. The blame will be placed on the Yaquis. Then let the government send their troops to pursue the redskins into the mountains. What do we care?"

Tony shook his head.

"It may be all right, Señor Chief, if it happens thus," he said. "Still it is a grave and dangerous thing. Listen! What was that? Was it the distant cry of a night bird?"

"I heard nothing," said Stockton.

"But I did," declared the Mexican. "It seemed far, far away, but I heard it distinctly. It was like a faint shriek."

"Hold on, Tony. Have you been listening to the silly talk of some fool who fancies he has heard strange sounds and seen a mysterious moving light?"

"No, señor, I have heard nothing of that; but I—Hark! There it is again!"

This time Stockton heard the sound, not a little to his surprise and wonderment. From far in the depths of the night came a long, weird wail.

Others heard it. The men about the fires sprang up, calling to one another. They seized their weapons and betrayed no small amount of excitement. The Indians came rushing, silent-footed, to the edge of the camp, where they paused in listening attitudes.

Thirty seconds passed, and then once more the sound was heard, this time being more distinct and apparently nearer. There was truly something awesome about this wild wail which floated across the bosom of the night-wrapped desert.

"It is the Flying Fear!" cried many voices. "It comes! it comes!"

It seemed that many of those frightened men were on the point of rushing to the spot where their horses were picketed and seeking flight upon the animals. Stockton realized that a stampede was imminent.

"Hold, men!" he cried clearly. "If this unknown thing possesses the speed you claim, you can't run away from it. Better stick together here by the fires, where we can defend ourselves—where we can see what it is if it comes. We'll find out if it can withstand good lead bullets."

"That is right!" shouted Tony, in Spanish. "Let every man be ready to shoot!"

"Silence!" urged Stockton, as he stepped forward alone, one hand uplifted and an ear turned toward the open plain. "I hear galloping horses!"

"Look! see!" almost shrieked a terrified Mexican. "There is the light!"

Indeed, as if it had risen over a swell of the plain,

a distant light came into view and swiftly swept nearer. Wonderful in its intensity, the narrow gleaming ray cut the darkness for a great distance, and it plainly showed three horsemen clinging like leeches to the backs of their mounts and furiously plying their quirts. Evidently the three were terrified beyond expression, and were doing everything in their power to escape from the awesome pursuer.

The watching men by the camp-fires shivered and shook. Some of them fell on their knees and muttered prayers to the saints. Some seemed spellbound and frozen in their tracks. Some retreated and cowered behind their motionless companions.

Again that fearful blood-curdling shriek came to their ears.

Stockton had a brace of long-barreled pistols in his hands. Among them all, he was the only one who seemed wholly master of himself.

The terrified horsemen saw them and screamed at them. They made room to the right and to the left, and the three riders shot past.

Then, in a twinkling, the awesome light vanished. Standing in his tracks, Stockton heard a whirring sound, accompanied by a significant chug-chugging. The mysterious object seemed to swerve to one side and sweep past the camp beyond the range of fire-light. Out there in the darkness a whitish shape was seen for a moment, and then it was gone. The whirring sound grew fainter and fainter, and finally the chug-chugging died out to the eastward.

"By all the stars above us!" muttered Tom Stockton. "It was an automobile! That's the thing which has frightened these poor fools until their blood has turned to water. But who would think of using an automobile down here? Who can it be—Merriwell?"

CHAPTER XII.

THE ATTACK ON THE CONSTRUCTION CREW.

At the head of construction on the Central Sonora, work was once more being pushed forward rapidly. A large crew of men were at work grading, laying ties and putting down rails. The clang of steel and the clink of sledges on spike heads made merry music.

Casey, the construction boss, was driving the laborers as hard as possible. He wiped the sweat and dirt from his face with the corner of a dirty handkerchief wrapped about his neck.

"Be afther gitting a move on yez, McGinnis!" he shouted at the boss of a crew of graders. "Muzetta and thim dagos are pushing yez. Are yez going to let a boonch of Italians do more worruk than your good Oirishmin?"

"They can't kape it up, sor," answered McGinnis. "Mebbe they'll worruk loike blazes fer awhoile, but they're quitters. I'll ate me boots av my bhoys don't do twice the worruk av thim dagos, wake in and wake out."

"Well, it's up to you, McGinnis," said Casey, as he turned away and walked along the grade.

Now and then he paused to give orders and to urge the laborers on. Casey was as relentless as a slave-driver. Finally he turned aside and joined another young Irishman, who was approaching.

"Phwat do yez think, Mulloy?" he said, with a slight grin and a wink. "Do yez notice the ground we've covered th' day?"

"Oi do thot," nodded Barney, with an expression of satisfaction. "Begobs, av they kape it up, we'll be afther gitting more worruk out av this boonch than we could from the ould crew."

"Thot's throe. Afther all, the stroike may have been a good thing for the road. Here comes anoother trainload av toies."

A locomotive, pushing half-a-dozen loaded flat cars, came down the track. The ties were unceremoniously flung off, and crews of men hastily threw them into piles along the roadside.

"It's me sober judgmint," said Casey, "thot we'll hear no more av Tom Stockton. Phwat do yez think, Barney?"

"Oi dunno," admitted Mulloy, shaking his head. "Shure an' he got the worrust av it, but they do say he's a sticker. He found himself up against the real thing whin Frank Merriwell got afther him."

"Phwere is Merriwell now?"

"Ask me," said Mulloy, shaking his head. "Ye can't kape thrack av thot bhoy. He may be here by sunsit, and he may be in Hermisillo, at the other ind av the loine. Gallup is wid him. Oi've been expecting Ephie to report."

"Is thot so? Well, Oi think he'll report directly," said Casey. "Av Oi'm not mistaken, he's coming yonder."

He made a gesture toward the plain to the south-east, and, turning, Barney saw a horseman approaching.

"Oi think you're roight," said Mulloy, standing with his hands on his hips. "Av iny mon iver rode all over the back av a horse, it's Gallup. One minute he's astride the baste's ears, and the nixt he's back on its roomp. By the way thot gint roides, Oi'd say he were Gallup."

In truth, there was nothing of grace or ease in the manner of the rider, and soon Mulloy knew beyond doubt that Ephraim Gallup was the person approaching. The Vermonter recognized his Irish chum of schoolboy days and waved his hat in salutation. Bar-

ney left Casey to look after the laborers and turned to meet Ephraim.

"Well, say, phwere have yez been afther kaping yoursilf?" he demanded. "It's toime ye showed up!"

"Say, gol-ding it! I've had more fun than a whole cage of monkeys," chuckled Ephraim, as he stiffly dismounted. "Thutteration! but yeou'd oughter been with us, Barney!"

"Will yez koindly explain who you're talking about?"

"Sartin; I've been with Frank. Sent ye word that Inza was here. We took her over to the old don's ranch. She's there with Teresa. Bet yeou a good Hubbard squash, by gosh! that yeou can't guess haow we made the trip from Hermisillo."

"Is it a conoondrum?" inquired the Irish youth. "Oi'm no good at thim. How did yez do it?"

"Auty-mo-beel," drawled Gallup.

"Auty-phwat?" exploded Mulloy.

"Auty-mo-beel," repeated Gallup. "Frank's gut it. He's brung it right daown here, and by the great jumpin' Jingoos, it's a good one! He paid four thousand dollars for her. Runs by steam, got a steam whistle, got a search-light, and she can jest skim over the ground faster than any gol-dinged locomotive on this whole line. She's painted white, and when she gits to goin', she looks like a chalk mark through the atmosphere."

Mulloy scratched his chin.

"Now who'd iver 'a' thought av using an autymobeel down here? Phwere aire the roads?"

"Yeou don't need 'em," answered Gallup. "Jest take a look at that bit of level ground that stretches aout yonder jest as fur as yeou ken see. Of course, yeou can't run the dern things everywhere, but, if yeou pick aout your territory, yeou ken git around mighty slick, and don't yeou fergit it. Say, Mulloy, bet yeou can't guess who's with Frank!"

"Phwoy, yez jist said Inza."

"Some one else," chuckled Ephraim.

"Inybody Oi know?"

"You hate!"

"Thin tell me—tell me before Oi hit yez on the nose! Spake up or Oi'll crack ye one!"

"It's Bart Hodge."

"Phwat? Now don't loie to me! Don't arouse me ixpectations!"

"Yeou make me tired! I say it's Bart Hodge. We all made the trip over to the don's ranch in Frank's auty-mo-beel, and arter leaving Inza there we kinder set aout on a few expeditions. He! he! he!"

Gallup snickered at the remembrance.

"I don't know whar Frank ever gut the whistle on that auty-mo-beel, but, by gorry, it's a jim hickey! Jest lift your hair right up on its hind legs when yeou hear it. Couldn't git old Joe Crowfoot into the machine. He said steam keers was bad enough for him. We had to leave him in Hermisillo, but he promised to show up over at the don's. Ain't kept his promise yit, though. He's purty sartin to come pokin' raound when he's least expected and most wanted. I tell ye Frank has gut these Indians and Mexicans daown this way scat blue over that autye-mo-beel. He's looking for Stockton. Left us at the ranch yesterday morning, taking Hodge with him, and we ain't seen him sence. Haow's the work going, Barney?"

"Great, me bhoy—great! Av we have no more throuble wid Stockton, you'll see us rooshing this loine through a dooble-quick arder. Oi suppose ye'll stay here th' noight?"

"Waal, by gum, I rather guess so. I'm purty nigh split in two, riding thot 'tarnal hoss, and I guess the hoss is dinged glad I'm afoot naow. It's abaout time to knock off, ain't it?"

"Pretty near," answered Mulloy, glancing toward the sun, which was already touching the western horizon. "We'll worruk as long as there's loight enough."

At this juncture Gallup observed a small, smooth-faced, quiet man, who came walking in their direction, occasionally glancing to the right or left, but apparently without any particular object in view.

"Who's that feller, Barney?" asked Ephraim.

Mulloy surveyed the small man a moment, and then answered:

"Calls hissilf Bill Roland. Came through this marn-ing wid o train-load av rails. Says he's afther lookin' for Tom Stockton. Says Stockton kilt his brother in El Paso."

"Ye don't say! Waal, by gum! he don't look very savage. 'Cordin' to his appearance, I'd say he'd better keep away from Stockton, or else he might git the same dose as his brother gut. Yeou don't s'pose he's a fakir, do ye? Yeou don't s'pose he's one of Stockton's spies, do ye?"

"Well, av he is, he's in mighty dangerous company," answered the Irish youth. "Something do be liable to happen to him almost iny toime."

The small man observed Mulloy and Gallup and rapidly approached them.

"Are you expecting an addition to your crew to-day, Mr. Mulloy?" he asked in a low voice.

"Phwat do yez mane?" demanded Barney.

"If laborers came they'd be brought through on a train, wouldn't they?"

"Corriect ye aire."

"Then you'd better order your men to knock off instantly and get back to camp."

"Phwoy so?"

"See that ridge to the south?"

"Yes, sor."

"There's something like half-a-hundred horsemen behind it. They came up from the south. Their actions were suspicious. At least, I thought so. They had to cross the open break away yonder. That was when I saw them. By keeping behind the ridge they can get near enough to make a dash and cut off this whole crew when it starts for camp."

"Waal, gol-ding my potetters!" spluttered Ephraim Gallup. "That saounds mighty bad, Barney. I guess yeou'd better take this gent's advice and hustle the boys back to camp jest as fast as they can go."

Mulloy lost no time. Calling Casey, he told him what Roland had reported and directed him to order the laborers to cease work immediately and hurry to camp.

The topmost edge of the sun was disappearing from view when the men threw down their tools and began to line out toward camp.

Barely was this move made when over the ridge came riding at full speed a long string of horsemen, and instantly it was seen that these men were dressed and decorated like Indians. A sharp yapping chorus of yells came to the ears of the laborers as the horsemen galloped in a direction that would enable them to cut the crew off from the camp.

"Injuns!" was the cry. "Run boys! Our weapons are all in the cook's tent!"

As one man, they started running for their very lives.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GRAY GHOST APPEARS IN TIME.

Such an attack was wholly unexpected. For some time the Indians of Sonora had seemed peaceable and had refrained from making raids. In the excitement of the moment there was no one among the laborers who suspected that almost every horseman who came over the ridge was a Mexican or a "gringo" disguised as an Indian. There was no time to make a close observation of those horsemen. The one thought was to race for camp and secure weapons with which to give battle.

Naturally enough, the laborers were badly frightened. Had they been armed it might have been different, but now it seemed that they were at the mercy of their assailants, who appeared bent on butchering them.

Of course, their dismay and fears were redoubled when they found that the horsemen would succeed in cutting them off from the camp.

Gallup alone was supplied with a horse. He mounted the animal and started to ride toward the camp, but, on second thought, drew up somewhat and whirled in beside Mulloy, to whom he shouted:

"Git up here, Barney—git up! This critter's gut to take us both!"

"Go on wid yez, Gallup!" cried the young Irishman. "Oi have a pishtol. Oi'll thry to take care av mesilf."

"By Jingo, it looks to me as if the whole bunch of us was done fer!" chattered Ephraim. "I wisht I was to hum on the farm!"

Roland was running easily at Mulloy's side. As he ran, he produced a long-barreled revolver and rolled the cylinder under the palm of his hand to make sure it worked freely.

"Those are queer-looking redskins," he said. "I wonder what tribe they belong to?"

"Dad bimmed if it makes any difference to me!" came from Gallup. "An Injun's an Injun anywhere you meet him!"

"Here the divvils yell!" grated Mulloy, as another chorus of yapping cries came to their ears. "They know they've got us thrapped."

"What's that sound?" exclaimed Roland. "That's no yell from human lips. There must be a train coming."

"It sounded loike a stame whistle," said Barney.

"Ye-e-e-ow! yoop!" whooped Ephraim, almost leaping from the saddle in excitement. "I know that saound, by gum! It's Frank! He's coming with his auty-mo-beel! Here he is! See him, Barney! see him! That's Hodge with him!"

The dusk of advancing night had begun to o'er-spread the desert, and out of this dusk came a gray shape that advanced with marvelous speed, heading straight toward the horsemen.

"Hooroo!" cried Mulloy. "Av it's Frankie, there'll be something doing!"

"Yeou bate yer boots it's Frank!" palpitated Ephraim. "Look at him! look at him! He's going right slam at them Injuns!"

"Look at the Injuns!" urged Bill Roland. "They seem rather unsettled in their minds. They're pulling up!"

It was true that the band of horsemen appeared suddenly confused and undecided. Among them one man rode out in advance and seemed calling for the others to follow.

Bill Roland laughed as he ran.

"Injuns!" he muttered scornfully. "Gentlemen, those are not Injuns; they're made up! I'll stake my life that nine out of ten among them are greasers! It would give me exquisite pleasure to get within shooting distance of the man who leads them, for I'll bet my last ounce of dust that his name is Stockton!"

"Begorra, Oi belave you're roight!" fluttered Mulloy. "It's The Wolf, so it is!"

"Waal, gol-ding his hide!" came from Gallup. "Mebbe he's run up against a snag. Those fellers with him don't seem to like the looks of Frank's 'Gray Ghost.'"

Straight at the horsemen Merriwell charged in the automobile. As he approached, they finally turned and took flight. The whistle of the Gray Ghost shrieked triumphantly. Beside Merriwell Bart Hodge rose to his feet, a repeating rifle in his hands, and opened fire.

The spectacle brought a wild cheer from the lips of the laborers.

Stockton, finding himself deserted, turned and followed his men, cursing bitterly. Once he twisted about in the saddle, lifting his hand and firing six shots from a revolver. Then he bent low over the mane of his horse and spurred the animal to its utmost.

The auto slackened speed somewhat, but continued to pursue Stockton and his ruffians, although it was plain that Merriwell was not making an effort to overtake them. To the men fleeing from Frank and his companions the shriekings from the whistle of the Gray Ghost sounded like the fiendish yells of a demon.

Merriwell was soon satisfied that the scoundrels would not rally at the command and entreaties of their leader to renew the attack upon the laborers. Then the auto swung round in a half circle and came speeding back to the head of the running men, Gallup and Mulloy being easily singled out from the others by Frank.

Ephraim's horse was wholly unfamiliar with automobiles and began to buck and shy as the machine approached.

"Whoa, gol-ding ye, whoa!" yelled the Vermonter. "What in tarnation is the matter with yeou, anyhaow? That's right, consarn your hide, stand on your head if

yeou want to! Yeou can't upset me! I'm right here, by ginger!"

Up went the rear part of the animal, with a snap of its heels, and Gallup found himself astride the beast's neck. A moment later the creature stood on its hind legs and danced, Ephraim clinging fast, with both arms about its neck.

"Talk abaout your circus acts!" he shouted. "What do yeou think of this? I'll bate a dollar and a quarter that this horse can walk a tight rope! Whoa, I say—whoa, dod bim ye! What's the matter with ye naow, going to turn wrong side out?"

The creature began to pitch "fence cornered," and at each twist Gallup's head was nearly snapped from his body. Finally the horse gave a mighty spring into the air, arching its back, and came down with all four legs stiff and its hoofs planted close together.

Ephraim bounced from the saddle like a rubber ball, rising fully four feet into the air and pitching off onto the back of his neck, while the triumphant animal went galloping away.

The Vermonter sat up and shook his fist after the horse.

"Drat that critter!" he snarled. "I've rid it sixty mile to-day, and I had to wallop it and spur it two-thirds of the distance. Naow look at the imp of con-niption! Any one would think the critter fed on oats and jest aout of the stable."

The Gray Ghost stopped near at hand, and Merriwell called:

"Get in here, Gallup. You can ride this thing better than you can a bucking pony."

"Be me soul," shouted Barney, "it's a foine show ye made av yesilf, Ephie! Yez oughter go into the business av bronco-busting."

"Naow that's sarcasm!" growled Ephraim, reaching round behind himself and grasping the slack of his trousers with one hand, while he made a surge as if lifting himself to his feet. "I don't like sarcasm, and I won't stand it, by juniper! You seem to fergit that I was stickin' by yeou and tryin' to save your scalp from them Injuns."

"It's a brave bhoy ye are," chuckled Mulloy. "The throuble with you is thot ye were brought up to roide a sawhorse, inshtid av one wid flish an' blud."

Bill Roland was reloading his revolvers. He had emptied the weapons after the fleeing ruffians, although he realized when doing so that the bullets were wasted. As soon as the chambers of both pistols were refilled with cartridges, he thrust the shooting-irons into their holsters and turned toward the automobile.

"Your appearance was most fortunate, gentlemen," he said, in his quiet way. "It looked mighty bad for us about the time you showed up. We had no chance to reach the tents, and, therefore, we would have been at the mercy of Stockton's ruffians."

"Who is this man?" asked Frank, speaking to Mulloy, in a low tone.

"Mishter Roland," said Barney, "Oi have the honor av introjoosing yez to Mishter Frank Merriwell."

The little man removed his soiled and battered gray hat, and made a sweeping bow.

"I've heard of you, Merriwell," he declared. "You have a record in Arizona. It's rather a clever idea, this of using an automobile down here. The Injuns and greasers are wholly unfamiliar with such machines, and, therefore, they're easily frightened. Stockton seems to be giving you a great deal of trouble."

"He's giving the Construction Company plenty of trouble," answered Merry, who had pushed his goggles up on his forehead.

"Blame his pate! he ain't havin' everything his own way, same as he did before Frank showed up," put in Gallup.

"I'm looking for this Stockton," explained Roland. "If I ever get within comfortable shooting distance of him, I think I can fix him so he won't trouble you any more. I have a little score to settle with him. He shot up my brother."

"As far as I'm concerned," said Merry, "you're welcome to settle the score as soon as you please. Jump in here with Mulloy and Gallup, and we'll go on to camp."

The entire crew had passed them while they were talking, and, already the foremost of the laborers had reached the camp. Long ere this, Stockton's desperadoes had disappeared into the shadows of the desert, which were swiftly turning to darkness. Above their heads the stars began to peep forth.

Before they reached camp they were met by armed laborers, who had seized the weapons stacked in the cook's tent. These men seemed to fear that Stockton would return, but Merriwell was confident that The Wolf would find himself unable to lead his men in another attack upon the railroad crew.

"He has received several serious setbacks of late," said Merry; "but he's not the man to give up. He's desperate now, and the next blow he strikes will be his hardest."

Frank was right.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FUGITIVES.

"Leave me here, my children," said old Don Juan Espinazo, as he settled himself comfortable on the big canvas camp-chair. "I will sit awhile in the shade and watch the setting sun paint the sky with soft colors. I am glad I'm not an artist. If I were an artist, the sun would put me to shame, for no art may ever reproduce the colors he flings lavishly upon the sky as he sinks to rest at night."

"You are an artist, Don Juan," said Inza Merriwell, with a smile. "You have the soul of the artist that takes keenest delight in the beauties of nature."

"Oh, eet was that I would haf told heem, could I say eet so," murmured Teresa, flashing Inza a glance of admiration. "He nevier geet old. His heart ees always young. He love the world, everytheeng all around heem. He love the sunset, the morning, the wild flowers, the stars, the moon—oh, everytheeng."

"Yes," murmured the old don. "It is this that has kept my heart from withering with my body. I am not yet ready to look back on the life behind me with regret. When a man begins to feel sorry that so many of his years are in the past, age comes swiftly upon him, and death claims him. As long as he lives in the present and looks still to the future, he can still defy age and death."

"Do you never think of the past?" asked Inza.

"Oh, sometimes. It has been a splendid life. In those days when the blood ran swift and strong in my body I could not come close to nature as I do now. I had no time for it. Then I sometimes thought that a man who had reached the years I have now attained must be robbed of all joys in life. I now realize my mistake. For every pleasure, for every joy that time takes from us, there is some other pleasure, some other joy of a different nature which she gives us in recompense. Once I fancied I could not rest in peace and ease, but now I have no desire for great activity, for strife, for contention, and for those things which stirred my heart with fierce delight many years ago. My fan, Teresa. *Gracias*, daughter."

"Can't we bring you some coffee?" asked Inza.

"Not now, thank you. See the soft haze in the south. Down there on the plain you observe my cattle feeding. Once there was a time when I must have guarded them with armed men, else my enemies, or hostile Indians, would have stolen them. My enemies have vanished, and the Indians are peaceful. The only trouble in all this land seems to come from that American, Stockton, who has gathered ruffians to fight

the railroad builders. That railroad will cross my land. Once I might have objected and fought it myself. Now I am glad it has come."

He turned his head slightly and took Inza's hand between his withered palms.

"You have a brave husband, Señora Merriwell," he continued. "In many ways he makes me think of myself as I once was. He is running over with life and activity, and ambition. He is dauntless in his courage. He fears nothing on earth, and accomplishes whatever task he sets himself to do. Child, you sometimes worry about him. That is natural. You sometimes wish he would not risk so many grave perils. Still it is his manly courage that you most admire. Were he different, you would not care so deeply for him. Am I not right?"

"You're right," confessed Inza, with a touch of pride she could not repress. "Even when I seek to restrain him from the dangers he unhesitatingly goes to meet, I know in my soul I would not have him falter."

"That is right, my child. Seek not to hold him back. By so doing, many a loving wife has ruined the career of her husband. The entreaties of love cause brave-hearted men to falter. In this world it is the man's place to fight, whether it be in deadly conflict or in business, and the bravest fighter wins. When do you expect him to return?"

"I can't say. He could not tell me how long it would be. He is satisfied that I am safe with you and that no harm can come to me."

"If harm should come to you ere he returned it would break my heart," said the old don; "but there is no danger, child. I am weary. I think I will sleep."

His eyes closed; and they stole away softly, leaving him there beneath the *hacienda* wall.

When Don Juan awoke, the vanished sun was throwing up fanlike rays of gold in the west. Away to the east the purple shadows were advancing across the plain.

Something caused the old man to sit bolt upright and peer eagerly away into the distance.

"Horsemen!" he muttered. "They are coming! My eyes are not as good as they were once, else I could see them plainer."

In a few moments, however, he made out two mounted men, who seemed to be riding furiously in the direction of the ranch-house, while at a distance behind them came at least twenty other men in hot pursuit. He heard a faint murmur of beating hoofs, and then to his ears came peculiar far-away cries that stirred his blood. Following this, he saw minute

flashes of fire, and, after an interval, faint reports of firearms reached him.

"Indians!" exclaimed Don Juan, in great surprise.

Then, as fast as he could, he hurried to the gate and shouted into the archway that led to the courtyard, calling on his servants. In a few moments half-a-dozen *peons* came running in that direction, sleepily rubbing their eyes.

"Wake up, you sleepy rascals!" cried the old don. "Ring the bell! Sound the alarm! Summon every one to arms! There are Indians coming, and they are in pursuit of two fugitives! We must give the fugitives assistance and stand ready to close the gates!"

Immediately there was the greatest confusion. The servants dashed away, uttering loud cries, and soon a brazen bell began to clang within the court-yard.

"Bring me my rifle, Lazare!" the old man shouted at one of the servants. "I am yet able to pull a trigger."

Then he turned back outside the gate and watched the approaching fugitives and their pursuers. Once more his blood stirred warm and swift in his veins. Once more he was thrilled with the fighting intensity of his youth.

"Come on, my bravos!" he cried, as he waved his hand to the two horsemen, who were furiously beating their jaded animals. "You shall find shelter here!"

Lazare came panting to Don Juan's side, and thrust a rifle into his hands.

"It is loaded and ready, señor," fluttered the boy.

"Where are the others?" demanded the don. "Do the cowards mean to leave me here alone to repulse those red devils and protect the fugitives?"

"They are coming, señor," answered the *peon*. "They are here."

The servants came pattering over the flagstones of the archway and gathered about the old don, each man bringing a weapon of some sort.

One of the fugitives waved his hat in the air and uttered a cowboy yell.

"Let them through," directed Espinazo. "Make room for them to enter, and be ready to give the Indians a volley. Then we'll close the gate."

But now, seeming to realize that the fugitives were bound to escape, the pursuers fired a last scattering round at them, uttered coyote-like cries of disappointment, and swerved to the left, abandoning the chase.

"Fire at them!" commanded the old man. "We can't reach them, but we can show them we were prepared."

He set the example by lifting his rifle and working the lever, rapidly sending several shots after the Indians. His servants fired also as the horsemen came up and drew rein.

"Inside, señor," urged Don Juan, with a gesture toward the court-yard. "We'll close the gate. They can't reach you now."

"Which is a whole lot lucky for us," said one of the men. "Our ammunition was getting a heap low, and our horses are plumb blowed."

"I trust you are not wounded, señors?" inquired Espinazo.

"Oh, I reckon not, though them cusses cut our clothes with their bullets."

Both men wore full beards and long, unkempt hair. They were covered with dust, like their foam-flecked horses. They sprang down and led the panting animals through the archway into the court-yard.

Having seen that the gate was properly closed and fastened, the old don followed the two men and joined them inside.

"I knew not that there were Indians within a hundred miles or more," he said. "They are supposed to be peaceful now."

The shorter of the two men laughed.

"Well, I judge we riled 'em up some," he said. "We've been prospecting in their territory, me and my pard. My name is Andrews. My pard's name is Brewster. We heard that there was gold up in the San Felipe Hills, and we decided to find out. The Injuns caught us there; and we had to hike to save our scalps. That's about all there is to tell."

"You Americans will do anything for gold," said Espinazo, with a touch of scorn. "Why do you not remain in your own country? Why do you come down here to arouse the Indians who are at peace? Ah! pardon me, gentlemen. I should not speak thus hastily. It was gold that led Cortez into this land years and years ago. It has been this seeking for gold in other lands that has brought about the decline of old Spain. Welcome! All I have is yours. Here you shall find shelter, and rest, and refreshment."

"That's mighty decent of you, sir," said Andrews. "And I opine we'll just about accept your generosity."

CHAPTER XV.

THE CAPTURE OF INZA.

The two prospectors were escorted to a room in the house, where they were left to themselves, having

urged the don to give them an opportunity to rest and recuperate. The old man promised that refreshments should be brought them without delay, after which they would remain undisturbed.

The moment the door closed and they were quite alone, the tall man turned to his companion, with a low laugh.

"Well, we're here," he said. "You did all the talking, and no one recognized me. This is a rotten poor arrangement for a false beard, and this wig is hot enough to make me devilish uncomfortable."

He removed both beard and wig, flinging them into a corner and exposing the face of Tom Stockton.

"I wasn't sure the old don could be duped that way," he said, "but it was worth trying. If I had to present myself in full light, some one would recognize me; but we'll make the bluff that we're plumb done up, and want nothing but rest until morning. Before morning comes I must get in my work."

"That's right, Tom," nodded the shorter man. "It won't do for us to be caught here in the morning; but it strikes me that you've got a big contract on your hands."

"It's the only way I can get a good grip on Merriwell," said Stockton. "His wife is here somewhere. I'll find her. Leave that to me."

There was a tap on the door, and immediately Stockton sprang behind it, while Andrews swung it open.

A half-blood girl entered, bearing a tray, on which were food and a pot of coffee. Silently she placed the tray on a little table, and turned to depart.

Stockton had caught a glimpse of her. Suddenly he closed the door and stepped out in front of her, holding up a warning finger.

"Silence, Noena!" he whispered. "Make no outcry!"

The girl's dark eyes opened wide in astonishment that was not unmingled with fear.

"It is the Señor Chief!" she breathed.

"Right, Noena. You know me. Jose, your sweetheart, is one of my boys. Jose is a fine fellow, Noena. I'm going to make his fortune. He trusts you, my girl. When he knew I was coming here, he said, 'Señor Chief, tell Noena I trust her, and she must obey you in everything.' Do you understand?"

"Si, señor," murmured the girl. "What it is that I can do?"

"You can tell me some things I wish to know. I

promise you no harm will come to you through telling me. There is a visitor in the house—a young American woman. She is the wife of the American, Merriwell. Is that correct?"

"It is true, señor."

"Where is she? Where is her room?"

"It is the one directly over this."

"How can it be reached?"

"Would you do her harm, chief? She is most beautiful and kind."

Stockton smiled.

"Oh I'm not hurting women," he said. "I'm a most gallant fellow, Neona. I love all of your sex. But I must see this woman and talk with her. Her husband is my enemy. I must tell her that I will slay him unless she can persuade him to leave the country. I shall frighten her, Neona, but I'll not harm her. How shall I reach her room?"

"The stairway is to the left outside, señor."

"Is she alone?"

"I know not. Sometimes Señora Gallup is with her."

"Neona, you must find out if she is alone. When she is alone, come and tap three times on that door."

"It is a very bad thing that I should do so, Señor Chief. It is not faithful."

"On the contrary, it is faithful—to me. You must not disobey my commands, Neona. If you wish ever again to look on Jose, do as I bid you."

For some moments the girl stood with her eyes downcast. Finally she lifted them and gave him a single glance.

"It shall be done!" she whispered.

"Good! You know what it means if you fail me! Now go. I'll listen for the signal."

He opened the door enough to permit her to glide silently from the room.

"Now, Davis," he said to the man who had given his name to the old don as "Andrew," "it's up to us to sit down and enjoy the feed old Espinazo has so kindly provided. There may not be any time to lose."

The two men drew up to the table, and coolly began eating and drinking, talking meanwhile in guarded tones.

Barely had they finished when the signal knock sounded softly on the door.

Stockton rose and picked up his wig and beard, which he hastily adjusted.

"I might run into some one outside," he said. "Be ready for anything, Davis."

Then he quietly walked out of the room.

In her own room Inza was writing a letter to Elsie Bellwood, in which she was relating the many strange adventures through which she had passed since leaving Tucson. So absorbed was she that she failed to hear the slightest sound as a man came gliding into her room and paused behind her chair. Leaning over her, Stockton grasped her securely and placed a hand over her mouth to prevent an outcry. At the same time he whispered in her ear:

"If you shriek, your husband is a dead man! He is in my power, and I can kill him! Be silent, and no harm shall come to you. You have your choice."

Slowly he tipped her back in the chair until he could look straight into her eyes.

"Will you be silent?" he demanded.

In response, she clutched his wrist and sought to tear his hand from her lips. He knew she meant to raise an alarm, and, like a flash, he shifted his hold so that his fingers closed upon her round throat.

A fearful struggle took place, for, during a few moments, Inza fought with such fury that it required all his strength to handle her. Suddenly she relaxed, and he held her unconscious form in his arms.

"This is better," he muttered. "She'll raise no outcry now. The next thing is to get out with her."

Ten minutes later there were sudden outcries in the court-yard, a clatter of iron-shod hoofs, a hoarse shout and several shots. The gate had been opened by Stockton's accomplice, and out through that gate sped a double-burdened horse. Stockton sat in the saddle, bearing an unconscious girl in his arms.

CHAPTER XVI.

HELPLESS IN THE HANDS OF THE WOLF.

The moon was high in the heavens when Tom Stockton drew rein in a little sheltered valley.

"We will rest here, Mrs. Merriwell," he said, gently lowering Inza to the ground and springing down himself. "I regret very much that I've been compelled to handle you so rudely. It's unfortunate for both of us. Without doubt I've caused you pain and distress. At the same time, I've greatly injured my own sense of gallantry."

Inza gave him a look from her dark eyes.

"You must be a most gallant gentleman!" she exclaimed sarcastically.

"Thank you, Mrs. Merriwell," he bowed, removing his hat with a sweeping gesture. "I know you do not mean it, but that's because you are not well acquainted with me. In all my life I've been gallant to the ladies. Necessity has compelled me at last to do

a thing most repugnant to me. I'm fighting your husband, and the stake is a fortune. He's a hard man to down. He's given me no end of trouble. As a last resort, I was compelled to reach him through you."

"Brave man!" she exclaimed.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Beautiful woman!" was his retort, as he regarded her with open admiration. "In truth, the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. This Merriwell is a lucky dog. Mrs. Merriwell, I'm going to picket my horse. If you run away, you'll lose yourself in the chaparral or the desert. You'll be devoured by wild beasts, or perish from hunger or thirst. If you remain here, I give you my word that you're safe from bodily harm. I'm not going to injure you. I'm going to hold you in my power until Merriwell swears by all that's sacred that he'll take himself out of Mexico and leave me to pursue my own course. He can't defeat me! He made the mistake of his life when he undertook it. It was also a grave mistake when he permitted you to come into these parts."

While speaking thus, Stockton had loosened the cinch and pulled the blanket and pad from the horse. He had been riding the animal without a saddle.

While watching him, Inza was beset by a fearful quandary. Her fear of the man was intense, yet she realized he had spoken the truth when he said she would undoubtedly bring destruction on herself if she succeeded unaided in escaping from him.

There was a tiny stream trickling through the valley, and, therefore, the horse could be watered. Having attended to the animal, Stockton rejoined Inza, who was seated dejectedly on the ground. He flung himself on his elbow a few feet from her, and spoke again:

"I know you're afraid of me, Mrs. Merriwell. It's natural you should be. You are in my power. There's no way for you to escape. To-morrow or next day you will write a letter to your husband, telling him that you're wholly unharmed, that I have treated you as far as possible with absolute decency and kindness. Perhaps you think such behavior on my part costs me nothing. Again I repeat that you're the most beautiful woman I ever saw. You're nervy, too. If I had met you a few years ago, I might have lost my head over you. I'm sorry that I have no blanket, but I have my coat. It is the best I can do, and it will aid in protecting you from the chill air."

As he spoke, he sat up and removed his coat, which he offered her.

"No," she said hoarsely, as she drew back, "I don't

want to touch it! It would give me a chill even deeper than the night air."

"As you please," he said. "I am tired, and I shall sleep."

Then he stretched himself at full length, his head pillowed on his arm.

A long time Inza sat there watching him, but finally his regular breathing seemed to tell her that he slumbered. She gathered her courage bit by bit, and slowly, slowly changed her position until she could creep toward him. He did not stir when she was within reach. He made no move when her hand found the butt of a pistol and slipped it from the holster.

She was shaking from head to feet. Still, moving with all the caution at her command, she stood upright above him.

"I could end it all in a moment!" she whispered, as she turned the muzzle of the weapon toward the sleeper's breast.

For fully two minutes she stood there with the pistol covering his heart.

"It's murder!" she finally whispered. "I can't do it! I'll try to catch the horse and escape."

She turned to move away.

"Mrs. Merriwell," called the voice of the man, "you're restless!"

Like a flash, she whirled with the weapon ready.

"Don't move!" she cried harshly. "If you do, I'll shoot you!"

"No, you won't," said Stockton. "That revolver isn't loaded. I thought you might be looking for a gun, and so I took pains to slip the cartridges out of the cylinder. Hadn't you better come back and make yourself easy for awhile?"

With her hands shaking, Inza opened the catch of the revolver, and broke down the barrel.

The moonlight showed her that Stockton had spoken the truth. The cylinder was empty.

Without another word, she tossed the weapon on the ground beside him, and lay down where she had been when he seemed to fall asleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE END OF THE GAME.

Morning was breaking when Stockton rode out of that valley with Inza. In a last unreasoning burst of desperation, she had fought him when he sought to place her on the horse. While begging her pardon for the rudeness necessary to accomplish the feat, the man had bound her elbows behind her back.

"By midday," he said, "I'll have you safely stowed away in a snug little cage, where I'll keep you until your husband comes to terms."

"You'll never conquer him, you wretch!" panted Inza.

"That's what you think now. You'll change your mind later on. I was forced to stop in that valley in order to rest this horse. I expected my partner, who aided me at the old don's, to join me there ere morning. There has been some slip, for he hasn't shown up."

Inza said nothing more, for she felt that words were worse than useless.

The sun came up, and rose proudly into the eastern sky.

It was an hour after starting, when Stockton's eyes detected a strange gray shape that seemed rapidly approaching across the plain, leaving a trail of dust behind. An exclamation of rage and dismay burst from his lips.

"By all the fiends!" he cried. "Here comes your husband now in that cursed automobile!"

The words electrified Inza, but, bound as she was, she could make no more than a feeble, ineffectual struggle.

"You'll not escape him now!" she panted. "You can't escape him!"

"We'll see!" cried The Wolf, as he headed toward the south and urged his horse to its utmost speed.

At intervals he glanced back, discovering that the approaching automobile was swiftly cutting down the distance between them. He made out that there were three persons in the machine.

The three were Frank Merriwell, Bart Hodge, and Ephraim Gallup. They had arrived at Don Juan's ranch two hours after the capture of Inza. By the light of the moon Frank Merriwell had followed Stockton's trail. It was slow work, for Merry had been compelled to do his tracking afoot, while Hodge and Gallup followed in the Gray Ghost. Possibly instinct more than ability kept Frank unfalteringly on the trail. It was his own keen eyes that finally discovered the double-burdened horse, and after that there was no attempt to pursue Stockton's tracks. Merry leaped into the machine, and away they flew after The Wolf.

"That's the critter, gol-dern his pate!" shouted Gallup. "We've gut him naow! He can't git away!"

"Give me that rifle, Ephraim," said Bart.

"Don't take any chances by shooting, Hodge," came from Frank's lips. "We'll run him down."

Although the fugitive did everything in his power

to urge his horse onward, they closed in rapidly. But Stockton knew the country, and he had a last trick up his sleeve. Across the plain ran a rift, called by the Mexicans a *barranca*. The Wolf realized that the pursuers could not cross this rift in the automobile, and, therefore, he counted on baffling them, if he could reach it soon enough. A cry of satisfaction came from his lips as he saw the long, dark line ahead of him. Straight at it he went, spurring the double-burdened horse to its utmost. It was a most desperate and reckless move. The splendid animal responded nobly and went sailing over the gap, while Stockton half-turned to utter a yell and wave his hat in the air.

"Look out, Frank!" shouted Bart. "There's a gulley there! We'll be into it in a moment!"

The automobile swerved round in a half circle, while Merriwell promptly shut off the power and applied the brakes.

"Give me that rifle, Hodge!" he cried.

"You're liable to hit Inza!" said Bart.

"I must take the chances! It's better that I should kill her than for him to escape with her now!"

Frank swung the weapon to his shoulder, but, even as he did so, from behind a bunch of sage-brush on the opposite side of the *barranca* came a spout of smoke, followed by the clear, ringing report of a rifle.

Stockton's horse made one mighty leap into the air, and its legs seemed to snap off beneath it as it struck the ground. Out from the sage-brush dashed a figure, at sight of which Frank Merriwell gave a great yell of joy.

"It's Crowfoot!" he declared, leaping from the automobile and rushing toward the rift, with Bart and Ephraim following.

They found a spot where they could leap the *barranca*, and a few moments later they had reached the fallen horse and the three human beings near it. With her arms still tied behind her, Inza Merriwell was on her knees, entreating old Joe not to use his knife on Stockton.

"Much good time to take um bad man's scalp!" growled the aged redskin. "Joe he fix um now!"

"Hold on, Crowfoot!" cried Merry. "You can't kill the man before Inza's eyes!"

"She better look um some other way," said the old fellow.

Nevertheless, Merry interfered and seized old Joe's wrist.

"Stop, I tell you!" he said sternly. "You shan't do it!"

Stockton looked up at Frank and smiled a bit.

"Thanks, Merriwell," he said. "I'm obliged. I think my right leg's broken. Sorry I had to use your wife a trifle roughly, but, if you'll ask her, I think she'll tell you I was not as bad as I might have been."

"It's true, Frank—it's true!" palpitated Inza. "He has not really harmed me in any way."

"That certainly saves you from Crowfoot's knife," said Merriwell.

* * * * *

Stockton was carried a captive to Espita, where his leg was set by a doctor.

"Well, Merriwell," he said, after this operation was performed, "you've beaten me. A man with a broken leg can't fight you. I give up. What are you going to do with me now?"

"Well, I think the company will take care of you,"

said Frank. "We have proof that you robbed the pay train, and you ought to get a few years behind bars for that."

"If I didn't have this broken leg, they'd never land me in the stone jug," declared Stockton. "The game was the stiffest one of my life, and the first in which I've lost. I've just one request to make."

"What's that?"

"Give me a loaded pistol."

"What do you want of it?"

"Bill Roland is looking for me. It won't make much difference to him whether I'm down with a broken leg or not. If he finds me, there'll be something doing!"

"I'll consider this matter of letting you have a weapon," said Frank, as he turned and left the room.

Twenty minutes later Gallup found Frank at the railway station.

"By hemlock!" exclaimed Ephraim, "the company won't have no bother with Stockton now!"

"How's that?" asked Merry.

"Bill Roland found him about five minutes ago," said Gallup.

THE END.

The Next Number (509) Will Contain

DICK MERRIWELL IN MAINE;

OR,

Sport and Peril in the Winter Woods.

An Encounter in the Woods—Buckhart Calls a Bluff. Piper's Camp—The Fat Boy Tries Snowshoeing. The Football Signal—The Attack Repulsed—The Death of the Moose—Disputed Game—What Happened to Buckhart—At Twin Camps—The Boy Who was Marked—The Cry in the Night—The Return. Recapturing the Head of the Moose—The Monster of the Storm—Timber Wolves—A Race for Life.

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About the Early Numbers of Tip Top Weekly

We receive hundreds of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 300 are entirely out of print.

We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell Stories now being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 150 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays."

We give herewith a complete list of all the stories that have been published in book form up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a fine colored cover catalogue of the Medal Library which is just filled with good things for boys, upon receipt of a one-cent stamp to cover postage.

The Price of The Merriwell Books is Ten Cents per Copy. At all Newsdealers

Frank Merriwell at Yale.	Medal No. 205.	10c.
Frank Merriwell Down South.	Medal No. 189.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Camp.	Medal No. 258.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in England.	Medal No. 340.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Europe.	Medal No. 201.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Maine.	Medal No. 276.	10c.
Frank Merriwell on the Road.	Medal No. 300.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Athletes.	Medal No. 233.	10c.
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Frank Merriwell's Foes.	Medal No. 178.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Fortune.	Medal No. 320.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Great Scheme.	Medal No. 336.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Hard Luck.	Medal No. 292.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour.	Medal No. 197.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Loyalty.	Medal No. 254.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's New Comedian.	Medal No. 324.	10c.
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Frank Merriwell's Problem.	Medal No. 316.	10c.
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Frank Merriwell's Stage Hit.	Medal No. 332.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Struggle.	Medal No. 280.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Trip West.	Medal No. 184.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Vacation.	Medal No. 262.	10c.



NEW YORK, January 6, 1906.

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STREET & SMITH'S TIP TOP WEEKLY,
79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

TIP TOP ROLL OF HONOR.

Following the suggestion of Mr. Burt L. Standish, that appeared in his letter to Tip Top readers in No. 480, the following loyal Tip Toppers have won for themselves a place on our Honor Roll for their efforts to increase the circulation of the King of Weeklies. Get in line boys and girls and strive to have your name at the head of the list.

William Alkire, 295 Laurel St., Bridgeton, N. J.

Z. T. Layfield, Jr., Montgomery, Ala.

J. G. Byrum, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Wm. Schwartz, New York City.

Edw. W. Pritner, Curesville, Pa.

H. D. Morgan, Indianapolis, Ind.

Wm. A. Cottrell, Honolulu, H. I.

J. (Pop) H., Birmingham, Ala.

Roy R. Ball, 902 Olive Street, Texarkana.

Fred F. Blake, 1512 E. 10 St., Kansas City, Mo.

The names of other enthusiastic Tip Toppers will be added from time to time. Send in the result of your efforts to push the circulation of your favorite weekly and win a place on the Roll of Honor.

APPLAUSE.

Owing to the number of letters received, the editors of Tip Top cannot undertake to secure their publication under six weeks. Those who contribute to this department must not expect to see them before that time.

I have just finished reading No. 495, and now I will begin to criticize.

I have read from No. 1 to date, followed Frank from his meeting with Bart Hodge at the Fardale depot, through school, around the world, through college, and I have been following Dick in the same untiring way, but my heart is with the "old flock."

I was a strong "Inzaite" through the struggle for wives, Merriwell versus Hodge, and it gave me untold pleasure to be on the winning side.

Now I am a "Juneite," very strong and willing to battle for my queen. Now I am sure Dick cares more for June than he does Doris, for when he was in the hands of cannibals on Fire Island, about to die, who did he think of? Why, June. When Dick was drowning in Crystal Lake, in No. 491, whose face came

before his vision in his last moments? Why, June's. Why did he so often spare Chet? Why, for June's sake.

Even Frank told Dick the night he had the party of old friends at Fardale, and he caught Dick and June in the hall, that he thought she was the girl who held his affections closest. I am sure of it, and I will be greatly disappointed unless it turns out so.

I have nearly given Chet up, as the bad seeds seem to have taken root; but I still think in time he will be a friend of Dick's, because some time ago Frank Merriwell said he firmly believed Arlington would reform in time and Frank's word goes miles with me.

I think Horace Logan will become a close friend of Dick's, and I vote him O K.

I like all of Tip Top's characters, and proclaim it the best reading published. Long live S. & S., Burt L. and all connected with Tip Top. Hoping this misses the waste-basket, I close.

Yours truly,

JACKSON GREENLEE.

Pittsburg, Pa.

You have been an attentive reader of Tip Top for many numbers, and have strong convictions as to the relations of the various characters. We all will watch the stories with a great deal of interest and see if your judgment is correct.

After having read TIP TOP WEEKLY for some time, I will try to write a letter to the Applause column. I am glad to see that Dick and Brad are back to the U. S. A. Frank is the best character, and I would like to see more of him in Tip Top. I see in the Applause column a person, who signs himself "Jewish Boy," wants a Jewish character in Tip Top. This would make a good character. I have noticed that the last few covers of Tip Top seem to have changed somewhat. I would like to see Dick stay at Fardale for several years yet, for I think Frank left there too soon. I will close for this time,

Huntingdon, Pa.

A HUNTINGDONIAN.

Perhaps Mr. Standish will introduce a Jewish character. He has a great many surprises in store for his readers, and he might include this among them.

After having been a constant reader of the great weekly, Tip Top, I think it's time for me to chip in and say something. In my opinion it is the best weekly published. Friday never comes too often for me. Mr. Standish has the characters down to perfection. I like all, Frank, Dick and their flocks, but I hate that coyote, Arlington. Texas is well represented in Tip Top by Brad Buckhart.

As this is my first letter to the Applause column, I hope it will miss the waste-basket. I will close now, with three whoops for Tip Top, its author and publishers, I remain,

San Antonio, Tex.

AN ALAMO CITY TIP TOPPER.

If you like Tip Top as well as that, no wonder Friday does not seem to come around quick enough.

Being a constant reader of the TIP TOP WEEKLY for the past two and a half years, I take pleasure in telling you what I think of it. I think it is the best weekly ever published for boys, it and Nick Carter being the only ones I read; but Tip Top always comes first, and I and three other chums of mine cannot wait for it to come out.

The heroes I like the best in the stories are Dick, Brad and the rest of the Fardale team.

Hoping this will escape that horrid waste-basket, which is always in the way, I remain, yours truly,

Winnipeg.

FRANK BROWN.

This admirer of Tip Top lives in the great Northwest, where the wheat grows so high in summer and the snow piles up so thick in winter.

I am a souvenir post-card enthusiast, and having read Tip Top up to No. 363, I take this opportunity to write. If any Tip Top reader will send me souvenir cards of their city, I will at once return the compliment. I think a post-card exchange should be introduced into the king of weeklies, Tip Top. I would also be glad to trade Tip Tops with any one who has the later numbers. I have Nos. 80 to No. 350, in good condition, and would be glad to exchange them.

Well, I will close for this time, which is my first letter to Applause. With compliments to Burt L. Standish, and three cheers for "Vrankie" Hans and the rest, yours truly,
Charlottetown, P. E. I., Canada.

J. S. LODGE.

When readers desire to exchange postal cards, all they have to do is to send them to the addresses of those who have expressed a wish to exchange with other readers. This is the simplest way, as all readers can communicate direct with each other.

As I am one of Tip Top's staunchest admirers, the bold idea entered my head that it was my privilege to put a few words in Applause concerning the dearest, most courageous and ladylike little woman ever portrayed in fiction. The one that never falters when nerve is needed, but who, when the danger is past, wilts like a sweet flower and cannot realize that she has performed anything remarkable. The one whose love is undying and who knows not the word hatred; whose confidence in friends is never shaken, and whose simple trustfulness is beautiful to behold. So I say:

Here's to the neatest,
Here's to the sweetest,
Here's to the truest of all that are true;
Here's to the whitest one,
Here's to the brightest one,
Here's to them all in one—
Who? Doris Templeton.

Now I don't want any readers to think me forward, but I would dearly love to correspond with any one who is with—or against—me on the June-Doris question, and would also exchange souvenir postals. Dayton has views that can't be surpassed, and I can prove this to all who care to exchange. I think this manner of collecting cards is perfectly grand, though this is my first attempt to draw any my way.

I want to congratulate Mr. Standish on the charming manner in which he pictures the fortunes of the two dearest fellows that ever existed on paper—Frank and Richard Merriwell. The rest of each crowd are too numerous in their good qualities to mention anything that might throw a shadow on the faces of their admirers.

Now, as I seem to have reached the limit, I will come to a close by thanking Mr. Standish for the fruits of his pen, Street & Smith for preserving it.

MISS HELEN MILLER.

31 Rockwood Avenue, Dayton, Ohio.

A sincere admirer of the TIP TOP WEEKLY and all connected with it. Its girl friends do not intend to be left behind by the boys in expressing their admiration of its pleasing and attractive qualities.

I have read your weekly for over two years, and think it the best weekly out. I just finished reading 495, "Dick Merriwell's Restoration."

Of Dick's flock, I like Brad, Dick, Tubbs, Jollyby, and Hal Darrell.

Please send me a catalogue.

I am in favor of a correspondence club. I would like to exchange post-cards with anybody, as I am making a collection.

Hoping this will miss the waste-basket, I remain, a TIP TOP admirer,

HERBERT DU BOIS.

Lincoln, Neb.

Here is a chance for some one to exchange post-cards for those showing views of Mr. Bryan's home town.

MY DEAREST TIP TOP: Words cannot begin to tell you how much I love you. Since meeting you a year ago, I am never happy except when you are near. At present I cannot see you oftener than once a week, but hope before long I will be able to see you oftener. I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. How old are you, and when is your birthday? Who makes your dresses, or, in other words, who draws the pictures on your covers?

Notwithstanding the fact that I like you so much, I will not be jealous if other fellows like you. How is your father, Burt L.? Well, as my letter is getting long, I will close. Hoping this letter will reach you and not be stopped by the waste-basket, I remain,

AN ARDENT LOVER.

New Albany, Ind.

AN ARDENT LOVER OF TIP TOP: It gives me great pleasure to receive your delightful note. Although it is only a year since we first met, I can truthfully say that the sentiments you express concerning me are reciprocated. It would be delightful to see you oftener than I do, but I think that at present once a week is the only time I can permit you to call upon me. I say this, knowing that you will not be offended, as I consider you one of my best friends. How old am I, and when is my birthday? What a question! But if you insist, I will answer the first: Ten years old. My birthday? Well, I leave that for you to guess! My pictorial creations are works of art made by an artist whose name is famous throughout the land. I am glad that you are not jealous of others, because I have so many admirers it would be embarrassing. I knew you would be fair-minded enough to consider this. And do you know that having such a host of admirers has not turned my head a bit. The health of my kind father, Mr. Standish, is very good, thank you.

Hoping to see you bright and early when I come out in my latest artistic creation next week, I remain, your well-wisher,

THE TIP TOP WEEKLY.

As I have been a reader of TIP TOP WEEKLY since No. 47, I take the liberty of a few minutes of your time. I think I can claim a little space in the Applause column, for I have never seen a letter from our city. Of the characters, I like Frank, Bart, Dick, Brad, Doris, Elsie, and Dave Flint the best. I think that most of the readers fail to perceive the sterling qualities of Dave. I believe that Chester will never become the friend of Dick. I am very much in favor of a correspondence club, and will write to any one who cares to have me do so. I remain, with best wishes to Street & Smith and Burt L. Standish, a TIP TOP lover.

JOS. B. WEAVER.

Grove City, Pa.

So you do not think that Chet Arlington will ever become the friend of Dick. Wait and see what happens. "You never can tell."

Having been a constant reader of your wonderful king of weeklies for several years, I take the liberty to write a few lines. I get a TIP TOP every Monday morning. Wish I could get it every morning. When I finish reading it I give it to some one who has never read one, or to some poor boy who cannot afford to buy one. For the past month I have got five boys to read TIP TOP. They all like it very much. Next month I will try to get more to read this wonderful king of weeklies. I like Frank, Bart, Dick, Brad, also Flint and many others. Among the girls are Doris, Zona, and June. Bart is like all the Texas boys; he is a stayer. You can always depend upon a boy from Texas. Hoping to see this in print, with three cheers for Street & Smith and Burt L. Standish, I remain, your most constant reader,

C. F. S.

Mexia, Tex.

The Texas lads are all right, you among 'em. We appreciate your efforts in getting new readers. How kind and thoughtful for you to give your copy of TIP TOP to some poor fellow who otherwise could not have the pleasure of reading it. We have put your name on the Roll of Honor.

I have sent you an Applause letter, but never saw it published, so I will try my hand at writing another one, wishing I have better luck this time in seeing it published. Say, fellow readers, how do you feel when your book comes late? Don't you feel like killing that book-seller? I get that way sometimes, so I had my life insured last week. When your book is on time you feel like you've been touched with a magic wand. You feel all your troubles vanishing, your heart is full of joy, and you go in the house with a Quaker-oats smile, and you feel like life is worth living. Ain't I right, TIP TOP chums? I notice a great many readers are exchanging souvenir postal cards. Well, readers, you no doubt know there are two kinds. One comprises views, and the other, tags. The tag cards look like shipping-tags, only they have a figure on them. The Roll of Honor is certainly a great thing and is proving a big hit. I ain't surprised at it making a big hit, because everything in TIP TOP has

proved a success. Since reading TIP TOP, about nine years ago, I can remember inducing a number of friends to read TIP TOP. It is rightly named a Roll of Honor, for it is indeed an honor to have one's name in such a grand and glorious weekly, such as TIP TOP has proved to be and will always be. A great many are anxious to write. Every reader who wants to correspond ought to give his address. I will start the ball rolling. I am eighteen years old, five feet eight inches in height, jet-black hair, weigh one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and am an American. I have lived in Chicago all my life. Hoping to see this letter published, as I was a good deal disappointed in not seeing my last letter published, I remain, yours respectfully,
543 South Canal Street, Chicago, Ill. JULIUS BOBINSKI.

Your last letter was probably mislaid in the mail and did not reach us. But here is your other one, to show that we did not intentionally neglect you.

I have read TIP TOP from No. 1 to date, and have induced at least two other young men to read it every week.

If Itallvo, who has a letter in No. 496, will write me, I can let him have the TIP TOP QUARTERLIES which he wants.

Would like to correspond with Blue-Eyed Meg, who has a letter in the same issue. Thanking you in advance,
Wayland, N. Y. WM. F. HARTMAN, R. F. D. 3.

The writer has quarterlies to exchange with readers who have requested some of the back numbers.

I have read most of the numbers of your valuable weekly, TIP TOP. Never having written to the Applause, I decided to stop putting it off and will now.

As to the characters, of course I like Frank and Dick the best, with Bart Hodge and Brad Buckhart as close seconds. I think they are all very good characters, as every day you meet the very kind of people that Mr. Standish describes in his stories.

I am strongly in favor of the correspondence-club idea that some of the readers have taken up, and would be very glad indeed to hear from any reader who would be kind enough to favor me with a letter, especially the young lady readers. I was placed in such a position in the country this last summer that I missed a good many TIP TOPs, and would be very glad to exchange with any one of your readers.

Hoping that this letter escapes the waste-basket, I will close, by sending my best wishes to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith, and also by asking for a catalogue of TIP TOP. Thanking you in advance, I remain, a TIP TOP admirer,
38 Mosley Avenue, Memphis, Tenn. H. F. HAZEN.

A catalogue of our publications will be mailed you in a few days.

Being a constant reader of your admirable TIP TOP WEEKLY, I thought I would like to see my name in your Applause columns as one of the Merriwells' admirers.

Many of my friends who read this king of all weeklies say they would like to see a Canadian character introduced as a cadet at Fardale, and I can assure you nothing would give me greater pleasure.

I would be pleased to exchange picture postal cards with any of the TIP TOP readers.

Hoping to see this in the Applause column, I will close, with very best wishes, a merry Christmas and a happy New-year to Burt L. Standish and all TIP TOP readers, CHUM SHEPHERD.
377 Margueretta Street, Toronto, Canada.

A Canadian character would add to the interest of the stories for our many friends in the Dominion.

I have just finished reading 496. I hope Dick doesn't get into any trouble about the Jolly Dogs.

I have not been reading TIP TOP very long, but I think it is the best boys' weekly written. My folks will not let me read five-cent novels, except TIP TOP, because it is a good, clean story, fit for any boy to read.

I don't know which crowd I like best, Dick's or Frank's. I wish Burt L. would put Frank in the stories again.

I think Dick is too good to his enemies, except in the case of Mig. Bunol, who is the biggest villain that ever walked. It seems funny to me that there is a character alike in both crowds. Hoping to see this soon, A GOLDEN STATE BOY.
San Jose, Cal.

A great many parents feel the same way about their sons' reading as yours do: TIP TOP is the only five-cent library they permit them to read. We are glad to hear that you take so much interest in Frank and wish to have him back in the stories, for it shows that you admire his manly qualities, and, perhaps, are trying to become like him. Our young friend lives in a beautiful little city, famous for its prune ranches in the suburbs, and a park two miles out of town, nestling in the foot-hills, where there are all kinds of mineral springs. Every Sunday you can see great crowds riding out to Alum Rock Park to drink the waters and enjoy a pleasant afternoon's stroll.

I have read TIP TOP for several years, but have never written to the Applause column of the "king of weeklies." The first thing I wish to say is this: I am a staunch "Dorisite." Where are all the "Dorisites"? Before June appeared it was all Doris, but now June seems to have the most admirers. That will never do. Come all ye "Dorisites," come forth and show your colors, but don't come under false colors. Some of the writers are as changeable as Portland weather. To say a word for the boys: I admire Dick and all his friends, but as for that Rob Riorden and his tools, I despise them all and hope that they will get their just deserts, just as Mr. Arlington got his—expulsion. Speaking of a correspondence club, I think it would be delightful. Nothing would suit me better than to have a good argument with some of the "Juneites." As I can think of nothing but Doris, I will close. Wishing great success to Mr. Standish and all the "Dorisites," I am,
Portland, Me. BROWN-EYED DAISY.

You must have been in a combative mood when this was written to want to argue with the followers of June. We admire your loyalty to Doris just the same.

Having read your popular book, TIP TOP, for at least two years, and seeing no letters in your Applause column from the Hill City, I wish to state my opinion of it. I regard it as being without a doubt the best five-cent book ever published, the characters every young American should copy. I cannot say enough in praise of it. I am getting up a collection of souvenir postal cards, and will gladly exchange with any one who will send me one; would also like to correspond with some of the girl readers. An ardent admirer,
105 Grove Street, Vicksburg, Miss. LEO EHLBERT.

When the wintry blasts sweep over the metropolis, it gives one a comfortable feeling of warmth to receive letters from the sunny South.

I have been a reader of the excellent weekly, TIP TOP, for eight years now, and have only once expressed my admiration. I was glad to see Frank married to Inza, and was only sorry that the sickness of Elsie prevented her from marrying Bart at the same time. I hope, however, Frank's marriage will not prevent him from appearing in the pages of TIP TOP in the near future.

I was glad to see Dick arrive in Fardale with honest-hearted Brad. And in "Dick Merriwell's Restoration," when Riorden cut Logan with the—well, I wish I had been there.

Would you please tell me the name of the man who draws the picture for the cover of TIP TOP? I think he deserves a great deal of praise for the delightful drawings.

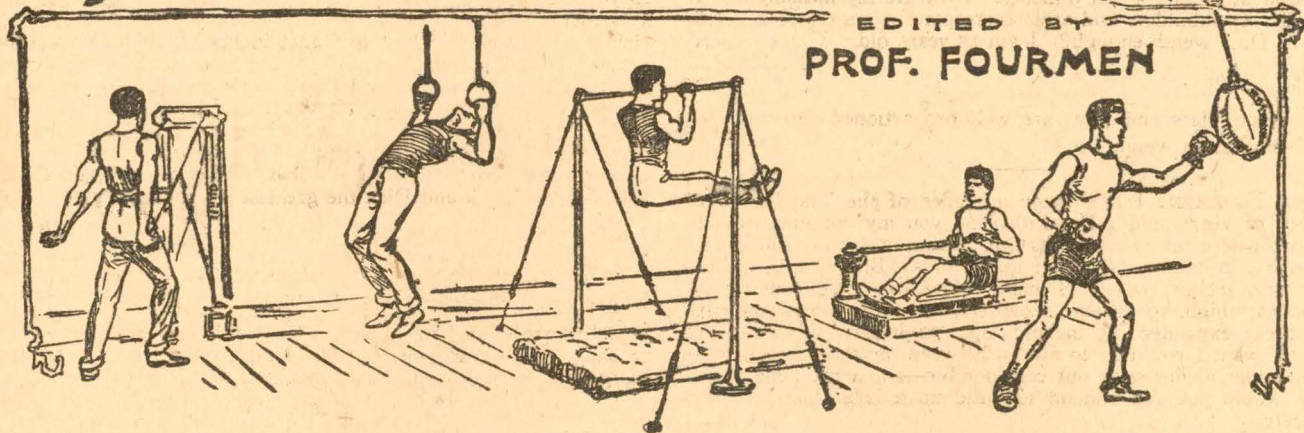
Also, please send me a catalogue of TIP TOP and of the Medal Library.

Well, thanking those who sent me souvenir postal cards last time when I requested them, and giving three cheers for Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith, I will close, hoping to see this in print, and remaining,
211 Fairmount Avenue, Newark, N. J. EDWIN A. LAMBERT.

An interesting letter from a friend who lives in the big city just across the river from Frank's home. Have no fear of never seeing your favorite in TIP TOP's pages again. He has so many friends to whom he is like a brother that he appears once in awhile to greet them.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

EDITED BY
PROF. FOURMEN



PROF. FOURMEN: Being a lover and a reader of TIP TOP, I take the liberty of consulting you as regards physical matters. I am tall and thin, being 6 feet in height and 16 years of age. My measurements are: Neck, 12¾ inches; chest, contracted, normal and expanded, respectively, 28, 32½, 34½ inches; waist, 26 inches; biceps, 10 inches; forearm, 10 inches; thigh, 15½ inches; calf, 13¾ inches; weight, 125 pounds, stripped. 1. Are they all right for a boy who has grown as fast as I have? I can run eight hundred and eighty yards in 2:28, do 4 feet 9 inches in high jump, 8 feet 6 inches in standing broad jump, and put twelve-pound shot 28 feet. 2. Are these fair? There is nothing I would like better than to arise at daybreak and take a three or four-mile run, but I cannot bring myself to crawling out of bed before seven o'clock or later. I go to bed early. 3. Can you give a reason for my "laziness"? I was on the high school track team last spring, competing in the high hurdles, but failed to gain points. I suppose this is due to inexperience, for great time must be spent in learning to negotiate them properly. 4. Do you know of a good publication upon the subject of "High Hurdles"? Would like to play football, but am not heavy enough for the high school team. 5. Do you think, with training, I could make a good shot putter? Thanking you for your obliging advice, I am, yours sincerely,
Cy.
Buffalo, N. Y.

1. You need to take on a great deal of flesh, but as you have a good frame, you should be able to increase your weight considerably, by proper training, in a few years.

2. Yes; they are very good.

3. There is no reason for your getting out so very early in the morning to take your run. Get up at six o'clock and start on a four-mile run by six-thirty. If you make up your mind to get up at that time and run that distance each day, you will find that in three or four mornings it will be easier for you to do it than the first time. Simply say "I will," and you will find that it helps a whole lot. "The Official Book of Rules for All Sports," published by Richard K. Fox, will give you rules governing hurdle contests. After you have increased your weight and general physical condition you might become a shot putter with the necessary training.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have been a reader of TIP TOP from No. 60 up to date, and I would like to have you favor me with your answer on the following measurements and questions: I am 20 years 10 months old. I weigh 225 pounds. I am 5 feet 8 inches tall. My chest is 42 inches, normal; expanded, 45 inches; waist, 38½ inches; thigh, 25 inches; calf, 16¾ inches; wrist, 7½ inches; forearm, 12 inches; ankle, 10 inches; neck, 17 inches. How can I reduce my waist? How can I develop the muscles of my waist? I have been using iron dumb-bells weighing six and one-half pounds each. I put them up above my head one hundred times each night just before going to bed. Hoping I see an answer in your paper soon, I remain, your friend, A. W. B. A.
Adams, Mass.

Take a great many bending exercises. Walk a long distance each day. Lawn-tennis and cross-country running are good to reduce your weight. Avoid sweets, pastries and vegetables, like

potatoes. Do not drink liquids with your meals, or coffee at any time, though you may drink tea. Take all the exercise you can get. You cannot reduce weight unless you make up your mind to keep at it a long time.

PROF. FOURMEN: As a reader of the TIP TOP, I take the liberty to ask these questions. These are my measurements: Age, 18 years; weight, 140 pounds; height, 5 feet 9½ inches; neck, 14 inches; shoulders, 18 inches; chest, contracted, 32½ inches; expanded, 36½ inches; waist, 29 inches; hips, 34½ inches; thighs, 20 inches; calves, 13½ inches; ankle, 9 inches; biceps, 12 inches; forearms, 11 inches; waists, 7½ inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What are my weak points? 3. How much should I weigh? 4. How can I strengthen my weak points? 5. I would like to be a large man, say about six feet high and weigh along about one hundred and seventy-five pounds. Can I succeed? Thanking you in advance, I remain, yours respectfully,
"A MERRIWELL ADMIRER."

Spokane, Wash.

1 and 2. You are underweight and lack the proportionate number of inches in chest measurement, though the expansion is excellent.

3. One hundred and fifty pounds is a fair weight for one of your height.

4. A general course of gymnasium work.

5. As you have a year or two before you reach the age when most young men stop growing, there is a chance that, by right living and a course of training in athletics, you may reach the height and weight you desire so much.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am a constant reader of TIP TOP, and would like to ask you a few questions. Here are my measurements: Age, 15 years 7 months; weight, 124 pounds; height, 5 feet 4 inches; chest, normal, 34 inches; expanded, 37 inches; neck, 14¾ inches; waist, 27 inches; biceps, 9½ inches; forearm, 9¾ inches; wrist, 7 inches; shoulders, 15½ inches; hips, 33 inches; calves, 12½ inches; thighs, 18¾ inches. On a horizontal bar I can chin four times. At a standing jump I can jump as far as six and one-half feet. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What should I do to get staying power? 3. What line of athletics would I be best in? Hoping you answer these questions, and thanking you in advance, I remain, yours respectfully,
Jersey City, N. J.

R. FEHR.

You are a well-developed boy and have a remarkable chest development. The measurements are good. To become an athlete, you should first take a thorough course in a gymnasium, under a competent instructor, to develop all of your good points. By that time you could determine on some one line you thought you could follow to the best advantage.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am a reader of your column and would be pleased if you will answer a few questions for me. My measurements are as follows: Neck, 14 inches; chest, 31, 34 and 36½ inches; waist, 28 inches; thigh, 20¾ inches; calf, 14 inches;

ankle, 10 inches; shoulders, around, 18 inches; across, 40 inches; biceps, 10½ inches; forearm, 10½ inches; weight, street clothes, 140 pounds; height, 5 feet 9 inches. How are my measurements? How do my shoulders and arms correspond in regard to development? Do I weigh enough? I am 15 years old. Yours respectfully,
H. M. H.

Chicago, Ill.

Your shoulders and arms are well proportioned, but you lack a few pounds in weight.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have been a reader of the TIP TOP for a number of years, and I herewith send you my measurements to find out where my weak points are. I am 17½ years old, 5 feet 8½ inches in height and weigh 134 pounds. Biceps, 11¼ inches; neck, 13½ inches; waist, 28 inches; forearm, 10½ inches; calf, 14 inches; thigh, 19 inches; shoulders, 18 inches; chest, normal, 33 inches; expanded, 35 inches; hips, 32 inches. I would like to know what I could do to fill out between my shoulder blades—my shoulder blades stick out considerable—and what kind of exercise would you recommend to build up a large bicep. Yours sincerely,
D. W.

Warsaw, Ill.

When you take on more weight the flesh will be proportionally distributed around the shoulders, and the other parts of the body will also fill out. Use dumb-bells and Indian clubs for your biceps and take deep-breathing exercises for the chest.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have been a steady reader of TIP TOP for the last six years, and know that it is the greatest weekly published. In all this time I've written you but a few times, and now I would like some advice. I am 5 feet 8 inches tall; weight, 148 pounds with clothes on; chest, 33½ inches, normal; expanded, 37 inches; waist, 30 inches; neck, 13¼ inches; arms, 10 inches; thigh, 18 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches; across shoulders, 18 inches. What do you think of my measurements? Where are my weak points? 2. Which are my strong ones? 3. Will you be kind enough to outline for me a list of exercises by which I can gain about ten pounds in two months? I don't want to acquire fat. What I want is good solid flesh, muscle and tissue in those ten pounds. Is heavy or light exercise the best to gain weight during the winter? Hoping that you will answer as soon as possible, and thanking you for past favors, I remain,
Respectfully yours,
JAMES WILLIAMS.

New York City.

There is no sure way of taking on flesh as rapidly as you desire. All you can do is to eat flesh-producing foods, take light exercises and trust to nature to bring about the desired result. Eat plenty of graham bread, potatoes, beef and mutton, cereals, ham and bacon. For exercise, use the United States army exercises, which do not require any apparatus.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am 17 years old, 5 feet 6 inches tall in my bare feet and weigh 140 pounds. I am well proportioned in every part excepting my wrist, which is a little over six inches in diameter. 1. What will strengthen and enlarge same? 2. I have a chest expansion of 4¼ inches. Is this good? 3. Following is my regimen: I arise at five-thirty and take a run of about three-quarters mile, and then return and eat breakfast after a good rubdown with a rough towel. I ride eight miles a day to and from work. Is this too much? It appears to be developing my calves. At night I go to the Y. M. C. A. and take about ten minutes with the dumb-bells and some light apparatus; work then a fifteen-minute round with the chest weights, ending with ten minutes at the punching bag. Then I use lukewarm water in the bath till the perspiration is well washed away, following with cold water and rubdown. I do this five nights in the week. Is the warm water harmful if used so much? Thanking you heartily in advance, I am,
EUGENE ST. LAURENT.

West Saginaw, Mich.

1. Bag punching is good.
2. Yes.
3. You have the right idea in exercising. It is necessary to go about a thing earnestly to succeed. Continue the course of training as described in your letter and you will develop a fine physique.

PROF. FOURMEN: Would you kindly give me your opinion of my measurements and your advice on improving them? Age, 18 years 8 months; height, 5 feet 6½ inches; chest, contracted, 35½ inches; expanded, 36¾ inches; waist, 31½ inches; hips, 35 inches; thighs, 21½ inches; calf, 14½ inches. 1. I think I am too heavy. What should I weigh? 2. Do you think I will grow much yet? 3. What are my weak points and my strong ones? 4. Isn't my waist too large? 5. How can I broaden my shoulders? My friends are always complimenting me on my healthy color, but I don't think I feel as lively at times as I should. Can you tell me the reason for that? Wishing you, B. L. S., S. & S. and Frank and Dick the greatest success, I remain, yours truly,
G. H. R.

Berlin, Ontario, Canada.

You should have sent your weight for me to judge of your proportions. However, you should weigh about one hundred and twenty-five pounds. You might grow another inch, but probably have your growth. The United States army exercises for the chest will broaden your shoulders.

PROF. FOURMEN: While looking over the question column of No. 497, TIP TOP, I see in answer to "A Good Wisher of You and TIP TOP," you give some of Frank Merriwell's measurements. Would it be asking too much of you to state in the question column Frank's neck, bicep and forearm? I am very anxious to know them. TIP TOP started me training two years ago. I am trying to become an all-round athlete. I play football and baseball. Run the hundred yards in ten and three-fifths seconds; put the shot thirty-nine feet. My height is 5 feet 9 inches; weight, stripped, 150 pounds; chest, 37½ inches; expanded, 41½ inches; biceps, 13¾ inches; thighs, 22 inches; waist, 29 inches. What do you think of my measurements and records? What do you think my chances are for becoming a first-class all-round athlete? I do not smoke or drink intoxicants. Age, 17 years. TIP TOP has no equal in its class. Yours,
Edinton, N. C.
L. T.

Frank Merriwell's biceps would probably be sixteen inches and his forearms twelve and five-eighths inches. Your measurements show that you are well put together and stand a good chance of becoming an athlete, provided you continue your present observance of the rules of health and train properly. If you can run as fast as you say and put the shot thirty-nine feet you are a "hammer," and I expect to hear great things from you in the future.

PROF. FOREMEN: Will you kindly answer me the following questions through the TIP TOP WEEKLY? 1. What weight dumb-bells should be used during the winter months so as to keep in condition for athletics in the summer? 2. Is a bath every morning before breakfast healthy? What diet is the best to increase the weight? I am 17 years old, 5 feet 11 inches tall and weigh 135 pounds. How much more should I weigh? Thanking you in advance, I am, yours,
L. H. N.
Urbana, Ia.

You should weigh about twenty-five pounds more. Use two-pound dumb-bells. They will be heavy enough for you to start with. Later on you may increase the weight. A sponge bath after exercising before breakfast will make you feel a hundred per cent. better. Don't overeat. A great many people get thin by stuffing themselves. It isn't the quantity of food one eats that increases weight, but the kind and the way it is assimilated by the system. Eat fat-producing foods, such as potatoes, beef, bacon, beans, cheese—if your stomach is strong enough to digest it—thick vegetable soups and cereals, like oatmeal.

"GOLDEN HOURS."

Boys, have you any old numbers of Golden Hours? If so, see what numbers are among them and write me, stating price. I will pay liberally to complete my files. Address WILLIAMS, Station "O," Box 24, New York City.

TIP TOP WEEKLY

CAUTION!

All readers of the Renowned Tip Top stories should beware of base imitations, placed upon the market under catch names very similar to Frank Merriwell, and intended to deceive.

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| 463—Frank Merriwell Blizzard Bound; or, After Big Game in the Rockies. | 484—Dick Merriwell's Cleverness; or, Showing the Japs the American Game. |
| 464—Frank Merriwell Captured; or, Trouble in the Black Timbers. | 485—Dick Merriwell in Manila; or, Papinta, the Pride of the Philippines. |
| 465—Dick Merriwell in Damascus; or, The Sword of the Sheik. | 486—Dick Merriwell Marooned; or, The Queen of Fire Island. |
| 466—Dick Merriwell on the Desert; or, Captives of the Bedouins. | 487—Dick Merriwell's Comrade; or, The Treasure of the Island. |
| 467—Dick Merriwell in Egypt; or, The Encounter on the Nile. | 488—Dick Merriwell, Gap-Stopper; or, A Surprise for the Surprisers. |
| 468—Frank Merriwell's Fingers; or, The Man Who Came Back. | 489—Dick Merriwell's Sacrifice Hit; or, Winning by a Hair's Breadth. |
| 469—Frank Merriwell's Retaliation; or, The Clash in California. | 490—Dick Merriwell's Support; or, Backed Up When Getting His Bumps. |
| 470—Frank Merriwell in 'Frisco; or, The "Go" at the Golden Gate. | 491—Dick Merriwell's Stroke; or, Swimming for His Life. |
| 471—Frank Merriwell's "Dope Ball"; or, The Wizard Twirler of Leland Stanford. | 492—Dick Merriwell Shadowed; or, The Search for the Lost Professor. |
| 472—Frank Merriwell's Handicap; or, Hastings, The Hurdler from Humboldt. | 493—Dick Merriwell's Drive; or, Evening Up with His Enemy. |
| 473—Frank Merriwell's Red Challengers; or, The Hot Game with the Nebraska Indians. | 494—Dick Merriwell's Return; or, The Reappearance at Fardale. |
| 474—Frank Merriwell's Fencing; or, For Sport or For Blood. | 495—Dick Merriwell's Restoration; or, Whipping the Team into Shape. |
| 475—Frank Merriwell's Backer; or, Playing Baseball for a Fortune. | 496—Dick Merriwell's Value; or, The Success of Square Sport. |
| 476—Frank Merriwell's Endurance; or, The Cross-Country Champions of America. | 497—Dick Merriwell's "Dukes"; or, His Fight with Himself. |
| 477—Frank Merriwell in Form; or, Wolfers, the Wonder from Wisconsin. | 498—Dick Merriwell's Drop-Kick; or, Chester Arlington's Team of Tigers. |
| 478—Frank Merriwell's Method; or, The Secret of Becoming a Champion. | 499—Dick Merriwell's Defeat; or, How Arlington Won the Second Game. |
| 479—Frank Merriwell's Level Best; or, Cutting the Corners with a New Curve. | 500—Dick Merriwell's Chance; or, Taming the Tigers of Fairport. |
| 480—Frank Merriwell's Lacrosse Team; or, The Great Hustle with Johns Hopkins. | 501—Dick Merriwell's Stride; or, The Finish of the Cross Country Run. |
| 481—Frank Merriwell's Great Day; or, The Crowning Triumph of His Career. | 502—Dick Merriwell's Wing-Shift; or, The Great Thanksgiving Day Game. |
| 482—Dick Merriwell in Japan; or, Judo Art Against Jiu-Jitsu. | 503—Dick Merriwell's Skates; or, Playing Ice Hockey for Every Point. |
| 483—Dick Merriwell on the Rubber; or, Playing Baseball in the Flowery Kingdom. | 504—Dick Merriwell's Four Fists; or, The Champion of the Chanson. |
| | 505—Dick Merriwell's Dashing Game; or, The Fast Five from Fairport. |

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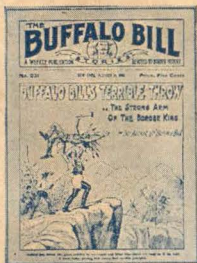
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TIP TOP WEEKLY

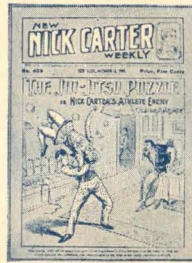
Frank and Dick Merriwell are two brothers whose adventures in college and on the athletic field are of intense interest to the American boy of to-day. They prove that a boy does not have to be a rowdy to have exciting sport.

Buffalo Bill Stories



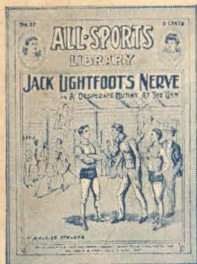
Buffalo Bill is the hero of a thousand exciting adventures among the Redskins. These are given to our boys only in the Buffalo Bill Stories. They are bound to interest and please you.

Nick Carter Weekly



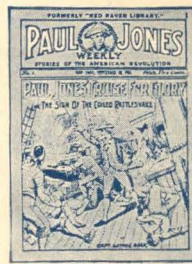
We know, boys, that there is no need of introducing to you Nicholas Carter, the greatest sleuth that ever lived. Every number containing the adventures of Nick Carter has a peculiar, but delightful, power of fascination.

All-Sports Library



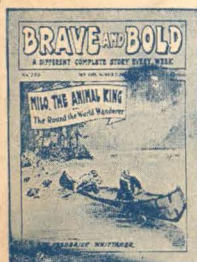
All sports that boys are interested in, are carefully dealt with in the All-Sports Library. The stories deal with the adventures of plucky lads while indulging in healthy pastimes.

Paul Jones Weekly



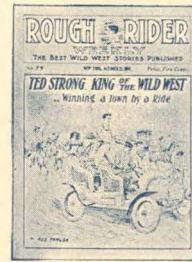
Do not think for a second, boys, that these stories are a lot of musty history, just sugar-coated. They are all new tales of exciting adventure on land and sea, in all of which boys of your own age took part.

Brave and Bold



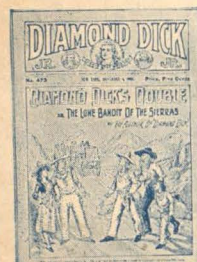
Every boy who prefers variety in his reading matter, ought to be a reader of Brave and Bold. All these were written by authors who are past masters in the art of telling boys' stories. Every tale is complete in itself.

Rough Rider Weekly



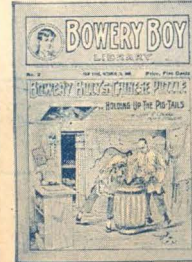
Ted Strong was appointed deputy marshal by accident, but he resolves to use his authority and rid his ranch of some very tough bullies. He does it in such a slick way that everyone calls him "King of the Wild West" and he certainly deserves his title.

Diamond Dick Weekly



The demand for stirring stories of Western adventure is admirably filled by this library. Every up-to-date boy ought to read just how law and order are established and maintained on our Western plains by Diamond Dick, Bertie, and Handsome Harry.

Bowery Boy Library



The adventures of a poor waif whose only name is "Bowery Billy." Billy is the true product of the streets of New York. No boy can read the tales of his trials without imbibing some of that resource and courage that makes the character of this homeless boy stand out so prominently.